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GIANT HORROR & SCIENCE FICTION!

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THE HAUNT OF FEAR



NO. 2

GLADSTONE



JULY

FEATURING...



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER

UGH! WHAT A... MESS!
BUT THEY'LL NEVER THINK OF
LOOKING FOR A FRESH CORPSE IN
THE COFFIN OF A MAN WHO
DIED IN 1867!



PUNNY
CRAIG

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EGAD, IT'S THE SECOND ISSUE OF THE HAUNT OF FEAR! DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE COMIC FAN AWARDS BALLOT FOR 1990, WHICH APPEARS ON PAGE 50. EACH YEAR THE CBG GIVES COMIC READERS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE FOR THEIR FAVORITE MAGS, AND THAT'S SO NICE! BUT YEAR AFTER YEAR SUPER HEROS PLUCK ALL THE AURELS AND I'VE HAD MY FILL OF THAT LET ME TELL YOU! IT'S PAST TIME WE LOVABLE GHOUUNATICS GOT THE RECOGNITION WE DESERVE! SO VOTE ALREADY, FAN-ADDICTS!



THIS ISSUE'S CREDITS

From **The Haunt of Fear** #5 (1950):
 Front cover art by Johnny Craig.
 "A Biting Finish!" art by Graham Ingels.
 "Horror in the Freak Tent!" art by Wally Wood.
 "A Tasty Morsell!" art by Jack Davis.
 "Seeds of Death!" art by Johnny Craig.
 From **Weird Science-Fantasy** #29 (1955):
 Original cover art by Frank Frazetta.
 "The Chosen One," art by Wally Wood.
 "Genesis," art by Reed Crandall.
 "Vicious Circle," art by Al Williamson.
 "Adam Link in Business," art by Joe Orlando.
 All stories colored by Susan Daigle and Gary Leach.

Artist of the Issue—WALLY WOOD

Wallace Allan Wood was born June 17, 1927 in Menasha, Minnesota, to a lumberjack father and a schoolteacher mother. With an ancestry of Finnish, Scots-Irish, and five other nationalities, Wally had, in his youth, brown hair, blue eyes, and an extremely slight stature.

During World War II, Wally joined the Merchant Marine and sailed to Eniwetok, Ulithi, the Philippines, South America, and Italy. After leaving the Merchant Marine, he enlisted in the Paratroopers and was stationed in Japan as a member of the 11th Airborne. Upon being discharged, he attended the New York Cartoonists and Illustrators School. Aside from this one short bit of training, most of Wally's art ability came from innate talent and self-teaching. He broke into the comic field by becoming a letterer and quickly moved up to assisting established artists. It soon became apparent that Woody was capable of fairing nicely in the field on his own, so he made the fatal plunge. As Wally put it, "After being exploited by nearly everyone in the business, I finally found my home at good old E.C."

When E.C. gave up comics entirely and concentrated on **MAD** the magazine, Woody became the star artist, adept at caricature and every assignment he was given. But he was ambitious to design and develop his own features, so went from the secure haven with Gaines and **MAD** to create his own characters and even his own magazine, **Witzend**, which introduced original creations by others in the field as well and became one of the first publications that led to the alternative press. Ahead of its time, there was no marketing strategy for such a curious title then, whereas today a direct distribution

Wally Wood,
 circa 1978.
 Photo by
 Gilbert Ortiz.



system supports dozens of independent publishers and a healthy industry eager to confront a new century.

During the 60's and 70's, Wood created many unique and successful characters including the Thunder Agents, Animaniacs, Bucky Ruckus, The Misfits, Cannon, Sally Forth, and the whole cast of the Wizard King, an expansive fantasy world that he personally published as one of the first graphic novels.

For Marvel, he redesigned Daredevil and helped establish that character as a long-lived superhero for that company. For DC, he was the original artist on a variety of characters, as well as an important contributor to their **MAD**-inspired title, **PLOP**.

But somehow, he was always measured against his brilliant early masterworks for E.C., and finished his career on a downward path, disappointed by the unfulfilled promise of his past achievements, disabled by deteriorating health, dead by his own hand at the age of 52.

—Bill Pearson

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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!



HEE, HEE! WELL, IT'S ME AGAIN! *THE OLD WITCH!* THE FIRE UNDER MY CAULDRON IS LIT ONCE MORE! THE EVIL BREW IS BUBBLING AND STEAMING! I'M READY TO LADLE OUT ANOTHER OF MY HORROR YARNS! THIS IS A SPINE-TINGLER I CALL...

A BITING FINISH!

HE COULD HEAR THEM NOW! THE SHOUTING OF THE ENRAGED POSSE AS THEY CURSED THROUGH THE BRUSH... THE BAYING OF THE Slobbering BLOOD-HOUNDS, HIS SCENT STRONG IN THEIR NOSTRILS...



THE OLD HOUSE! IF I CAN GET... GASP... THERE BEFORE THEY CATCH ME... GASP... I CAN ESCAPE...

SUDDENLY THE HOUSE LOOMED UP AHEAD! ITS ROTTED SHUTTERS HUNG GRAZILY ON WINDOWS WHOSE PANES HAD LONG SINCE VANISHED! ITS SAGGING ROOF LEANED AWKWARDLY! THE CROOKED CHIMNEY WAS SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE GOLD MOON...



NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT THE TUNNEL! NO ONE BUT ME!

BRUNO BURST THROUGH THE DECAYED DOOR! THE CRASH OF THE WORM-EATEN WOOD ECHOED THROUGH THE EMPTY HOUSE...

THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER... BUT I'VE... I'VE BEATEN THEM!



HE MADE FOR THE FIREPLACE! IT WAS A HUGE STONE AFFAIR COVERING ALMOST ONE WALL OF THE ROOM...

THE SECRET ENTRANCE... THAT I DISCOVERED... AS A BOY...



THE STEPS WERE THERE, JUST AS HE HAD REMEMBERED THEM! HE STUMBLED DOWN... THE ROTTED WOOD GIVING WAY BENEATH HIS WEIGHT! HE PLUNGED INTO THE BLACKNESS...



HE LAY AT THE BOTTOM... IN THE DARKNESS... PANTING! HIS RIGHT LEG THROBBED WITH PAIN! IT WAS BROKEN! ABOVE... THE THUMPING OF BOOTED FEET TOLD HIM THEY WERE IN THE HOUSE...

THEY'LL NEVER FIND THE ENTRANCE TO THIS TUNNEL! IT'S MY SECRET, ALL MINE! OOH! MY LEG...



UPSTAIRS, HE COULD HEAR THE MUFFLED VOICES... THE CONFUSION... THE YELPING OF THE HOUNDS... AS THEY SEARCHED THE HOUSE! BEFORE HIM, THE TUNNEL STRETCHED OUT INTO THE BLOOM...

GOT TO GET MOVIN'! GOT TO GET TO THE OTHER END... TO THE RIVER! WHAT'S THIS? A SHOVEL! GOOD! I'LL TAKE IT WITH ME... IN CASE...



THE TUNNEL BRUNO WAS IN WAS OLD! IT HAD BEEN USED AS AN ESCAPE FROM THE HOUSE DURING THE CIVIL WAR... PART OF THE WELL KNOWN "UNDERGROUND RAILWAY"! HE DRAGGED HIMSELF FORWARD...

I WONDER... HOW MANY OTHERS LIKE ME... USED THIS TUNNEL TO ESCAPE FROM THE AUTHORITIES...



AS BRUNO CREEPT THROUGH THE BLACK, THOUGHTS FLASHED THROUGH HIS BRAIN! THOUGHTS OF WHY HE WAS THERE! OF HOW IT HAD ALL STARTED! HE REMEMBERED IT ALL SO WELL! FIVE MONTHS AGO... THAT NIGHT AT ELLEN'S HOUSE...

BUT, ELLEN! YOU MUST DECIDE BETWEEN US! WE BOTH WANT TO MARRY YOU! YOU'VE GOT TO PICK ONE...

I'M SORRY, BOB! YOU'RE BOTH SWEET... YOU AND BRUNO! I... I CAN'T DECIDE!



YES! BRUNO REMEMBERED! THERE IN THE DARKNESS OF THE TUNNEL HE REMEMBERED HIS DECISION! HE HAD DECIDED TO MAKE UP ELLEN'S MIND! SETTLE IT... ONCE AND FOR ALL...

HE'S COMING... NOW! HE'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT HIM...



AS BOB HAD PASSED THE SPOT WHERE HE HAD HID, BRUNO HAD HURLED HIMSELF UPON HIM...



AGAIN AND AGAIN THE LEAD PIPE HAD COME DOWN...



...UNTIL BOB HAD MOVED NO MORE. NOW TO DISPOSE OF THE BODY! SOME PLACE WHERE THEY'LL NEVER FIND IT!



BRUNO HAD LIFTED HIS DEAD RIVAL ONTO HIS SHOULDERS! A PLAN HAD FORMED IN HIS MIND! HE CARRIED THE BODY TO THE CIVIL WAR BURIAL GROUNDS...

NO ONE GETS BURIED HERE ANY MORE! THEY USE THE NEW CEMETERY NEARER TO TOWN...



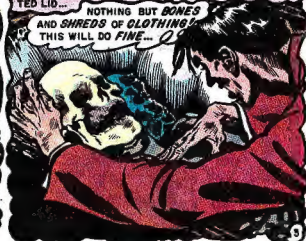
HE HAD LEFT THE BODY AND SEARCHED A NEIGHBORING FARM! AFTER HAVING FOUND WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR, HE HAD RETURNED WITH THE SHOVEL! THEN HE BEGAN TO DIG...

THE GRAVE MARKER SAYS 'THADDIUS GODKIN... DIED 1867!' THERE SHOULDN'T BE MUCH LEFT OF HIM...



SOON A HOLLOW THUD TOLD BRUNO HE HAD STRUCK OLD THADDIUS GODKIN'S COFFIN! HE LIFTED THE ROTTED LID...

NOTHING BUT BONES AND SHREDS OF CLOTHING! THIS WILL DO FINE...



BRUNO SLID HIS FRESHLY KILLED VICTIM INTO THE AGED CASKET...

YOU AND THADDIUS OUGHT TO BE NICE AND COMFY TOGETHER, BOB!



OF COURSE THEY NEVER FOUND HIM! BRUNO LAUGHED TO HIMSELF AS HE MOVED THROUGH THE TUNNEL...

WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT TO LOOK IN THE GRAVE OF A MAN BURIED IN 1867?



THEN BRUNO THOUGHT OF ELLEN OF WHAT HE TOLD HER AFTER BOB "DISAPPEARED"...

HE'S PROBABLY RUN OFF, ELLEN! MAYBE TO THE BIG CITY! THIS OUGHT TO SHOW YOU WHO LOVES YOU *MOST*!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, BRUNO!



THE TUNNEL TURNED SHARPLY! BRUNO'S LEG PAINED HIM AS HE HALF-CRAWLED, HALF-SLID AROUND THE CORNER...

ALMOST TO THE END NOW! I REMEMBER... WHEN I WAS A BOY! THIS PART PASSES BENEATH THE OLD BURYIN' GROUNDS!



...AND ELLEN! HE HAD MARRIED HER SOON AFTER! HE HAD BEEN HAPPY... SO HAPPY... UNTIL... THAT MORNING...

ELLEN! WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?

YOU... YOU TALKED IN YOUR SLEEP!



FEAR HAD STOLEN INTO BRUNO'S HEART! IT HAD CRAWLED UP HIS SPINE LIKE A SLIVER OF ICE... HAD POUNDED IN HIS BRAIN...

WHAT DID I SAY, ELLEN?

YOU MURDERED HIM, DIDN'T YOU? YOU MURDERED BOB!



HE REMEMBER IT SO WELL! AS IF IT WERE YESTERDAY! BUT... BRUNO CHUCKLED... IT WAS YESTERDAY! BRUNO'S BRAIN... HIS THOUGHTS REELED! HE REMEMBERED HOW HE HAD REACHED FOR HER! HOW WHITE HER FACE HAD BEEN... AND HER THROAT... HER THROAT...

YES, ELLEN! I KILLED HIM! BUT... YOU'LL NEVER TELL ANYONE! NEVER...



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YES, HER THROAT! HER SOFT WHITE THROAT! NOW EASILY HE HAD SLIPPED HIS FINGERS ABOUT IT! HOW SIMPLE IT HAD BEEN TO CLOSE THEM...TIGHTER...TIGHTER...UNTIL...

SHE... SHE'S DEAD!



AND MRS. LANE! PRYING, SPYING MRS. LANE! SHE HAD BEEN WATCHING FROM HER WINDOW! SHE GOREAMED! HE COULDN'T STAND SCREAMING! BRUNO RUSHED FROM HIS HOUSE...SNATCHING THE BREAD KNIFE FROM THE TABLE...

YOU MUSTN'T TELL EITHER, MRS. LANE! YOU'LL HAVE TO DIE, TOO!



YES! IT HAD BEEN YESTERDAY! HE WAS SURE OF IT NOW! MR. LANE HAD SEEN HIM...STANDING OVER MRS. LANE...AND THE KNIFE...WET...STICKY...RED...

HE KILLED HER! GOOD LORD, YOU'VE GOT TO STOP HIM! HE'S MAD! MAD!



THEN...THE POSSE! THEY CHASED HIM! HE HAD HIDDEN IN THE WOODS...BUT THE BLOODHOUNDS FOUND HIS SCENT! AND THEN HE HAD THOUGHT OF IT! THE HOUSE...THE DESERTED OLD HOUSE WITH THE TUNNEL HE HAD FOUND...AS A BOY...

IF...I CAN GET THERE BEFORE THEY CATCH ME...I CAN ESCAPE...THROUGH THE TUNNEL...



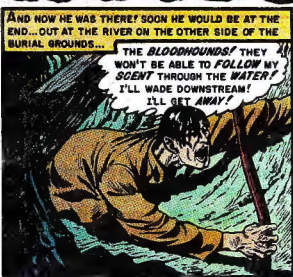
AND NOW HE WAS THERE! SOON HE WOULD BE AT THE END...OUT AT THE RIVER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS...

THE BLOODHOUNDS! THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO FOLLOW MY SCENT THROUGH THE WATER! I'LL WADE DOWNSTREAM! I'LL GET AWAY!



SUDDENLY, BRUNO CAME TO A STOP! THE TUNNEL! THE TUNNEL ENDED...

MUST HAVE GAYED IN! THE HEAVY RAINS...THE RIVER OVERFLOWED TWO YEARS AGO...



GOT TO DIG MYSELF THROUGH
THE REST OF THE WAY! LUCKY
I BROUGHT THE SHOVEL...



BRUNO WENT TO THE TASK OF CLEAR-
ING HIS WAY THROUGH THE GAVED-IN
PART OF THE TUNNEL! HE LAUGHED
TO HIMSELF...

I'LL GET THE POSSE'S
LOOKIN' FOR ME BACK AT
THE HOUSE...



THE SPADE SANK INTO THE SOFT
EARTH AHEAD! THERE WASN'T
MUCH ROOM TO MOVE AROUND...

I'LL HAVE TO SWITCH THE
DIRT FROM UP AHEAD...TO
BEHIND ME...



THEN THE SHOVEL STRUCK IT! IT SPLINTERED UNDER
THE BLOW! BRUNO LIT A MATCH AND PEERED AT WHAT
HE HAD FOUND...



WOOD... BRASS HANDLES... STUDS?
IT... IT'S A COFFIN!

AT FIRST HE WAS SHOOKED... BUT THEN HE REMEM-
BERED! THIS PART OF THE TUNNEL *DID* PASS UNDER
THE BURYING GROUNDS...



GOT TO GET IT OUT OF
THE WAY... GOT TO GET
BY IT...

THE ROTTED AND DECAYED WOOD GAVE WAY AS BRUNO
PUSHED! HIS ARM SHOT FORWARD INTO THE HOLE...



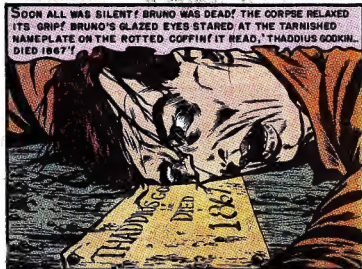
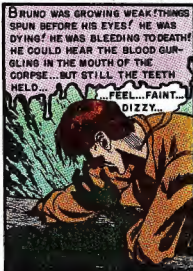
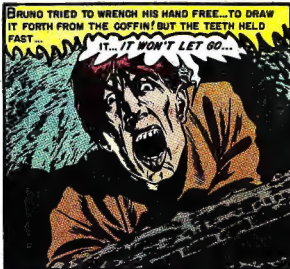
WHAT THE...?

FEELS LIKE... LIKE...
A HEAD!

THE STENCH REACHED HIS NOSTRILS! FUNNY! SUCH
AN OLD COFFIN WITH A BODY NOT YET FULLY DE-
COMPOSED? HIS HAND TRAVELED OVER THE FEAT-
URES! THEY WERE PULPY AND SOFT! THEN THE
TEETH CLOSED DOWN...



IT... IT'S GOT MY
HAND! IT'S BITING
ME!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

WELCOME, MY VERY DEAR *FIENDS*! WELCOME ONCE AGAIN TO THE *CRYPT OF TERROR*! I AM THE *CRYPT-KEEPER*! I SEE IT IS TIME ONCE MORE FOR ANOTHER BLOOD-CURLING, SPINE-TINGLING YARN FROM MY VAST COLLECTION OF HORROR STORIES WHICH I KEEP HERE IN THE *CRYPT*! THIS TALE CONCERNS A CARNIVAL THE KIND THAT TRAVELS FROM TOWN TO TOWN! THE MANAGER OF THIS CARNIVAL WAS HENRY HASTINGS' LISTEN NOW AS THE STORY UNFOLDS IN HENRY'S OWN WORDS! HE CALLS IT

HORROR & FREAK TENTS!



MY NAME IS HENRY HASTINGS! I MANAGED ONE OF THOSE TWO-BIT CARNIVALS THAT HITS YOUR TOWN EVERY NOW AND THEN! YOU KNOW THE KIND! AMUSEMENT RIDES... ACROBATS... CHIEFLING GAMES! THIS PARTICULAR CARNIVAL HAD A *SPECIAL ATTRACTION... A FREAK SHOW*

STEP RIGHT UP, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! SEE FANNY, THE FOUR-HUNDRED POUND FAT LADY.



THE OWNER OF THE FREAK CON-
GREGATION WAS A FAT-FACED CHAR-
ACTER NAMED LOOZEY GLANTZ! OUT
FRONT... HE WAS A GREAT SHOWMAN...

...BUT BACKSTAGE, HE WAS A
RAT! HIS FREAKS DESPISED HIM!
HE TREATED THEM LIKE DIRT!
THERE WAS FANNY, THE FAT LADY...

...AND KETAL, THE INDIAN RUBBER
MAN... WHAT'S THE MATTER,
KETAL? DON'T YOU LIKE
YOUR JOB? I WATCHED
YOUR ACT! STRETCH IT...
STRETCH IT MORE... OOOOWW!



FOR TWENTY-FIVE
CENTS... A FOURTH PART
OF A DOLLAR... YOU'LL
SEE THE GREATEST
COLLECTION OF FREAKS
TO EVER...



YEAH! YOU HEARD
ME! SMILE AT THE
PEOPLE, YOU OVER-
GROWN GOW! DON'T
JUST SIT THERE...
EARN YOUR KEEP!



...AND THE POOR PATHETIC CASE THEY CALLED
CORPUS, THE ARMLESS AND LEGLESS BOY! HE
HAD BEEN BORN WITHOUT LIMBS AND WAS QUITE
HELPLESS! GLANTZ WAS PARTICULARLY MEAN
TO CORPUS...

CORPUS WAS FORCED TO EAT LIKE A DOG... AND
GLANTZ ROARED WITH SADISTIC DELIGHT...



FANNY! DON'T FEED HIM!
LET HIM EAT HIMSELF! PUT
THE PLATE DOWN IN FRONT
OF HIM...

BUT, MR. GLANTZ! HE



HAW... HAW... CORPUS! IF YOU
HAD WHISKERS... HAW... HAW...
I COULD CALL YOU FIDO...

GLANTZ NEVER LOST A SINGLE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLICT
SEVERE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL TORTURE UPON HIS
POOR FREAKS! HIS PERVERTED SENSE OF HUMOR
KEPT HIM WELL SUPPLIED WITH INGENIOUS METHODS...

ZOLTO WAS THE SHARP-EYED KNIFE THROWER!
HIS ACT CONSISTED OF THROWING KNIVES, ICE-
PICKS, CLEAVERS AND THE LIKE AT HIS WIFE
WHO STOOD SPREAD-EAGLED ABOUT TWENTY
FEET AWAY...



I JUST
THOUGHT YOU OUGHT TO
KNOW! YOUR WIFE'S BEEN
TWO-TIMING YOU! SHE'S
RUMMIN' AROUND WITH
A CONCESSION OWNER

YOU'RE LYING!
IT ISN'T TRUE!



OF COURSE GLANTZ LIED! BUT HE HAD SUCCESSFULLY INSTILLED THAT SPARK OF JEALOUSY IN ZOLTO'S MIND THAT CAUSED THE HAND TO TREMBLE... EVER SO SLIGHTLY...

IF THE KNIVES COME CLOSE, MRS. ZOLTO, REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU! YOUR HUSBAND WOULD LIKE YOU OUT OF THE WAY, THERE'S A LITTLE DANCING GIRL DOWN THE MIDWAY...

YOU... YOU'RE JOKING... AREN'T YOU...

THUNK

I'M TELLING YOU THIS, ALL OF THIS, BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO KNOW EXACTLY THE TYPE OF MAN LOOEY GLANTZ WAS! THE LITTLE JOKE HE HAD PLAYED ON THE ZOLTOS HAD HAD ITS EFFECT...

SHE'S GONE! LEFT ME! JUST BECAUSE I SLIPPED AND KICKED HER ARM LAST NIGHT...

HAW... HAW! SHE FIGURED YOUR KNIVES WERE GETTING TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT, EH, ZOLTO?

IT'S YOUR FAULT, GLANTZ! YOU DID IT! YOU BROKE ME UP WITH THOSE LIES ABOUT HER...

WATCH YOURSELF, ZOLTO, OR YOU'LL BE LOOKING FOR A NEW GARNY! REMEMBER, YOU'RE NOT A YOUNG MAN...

...SOB...
...SOB...

DON'T WORRY ZOLTO! I KNOW WHERE YOU CAN FIND A NEW PARTNER FOR YOUR ACT! THERE'S A LITTLE DANCING GIRL... DOWN THE MIDWAY...

A FEW NIGHTS LATER, MRS. ZOLTO RETURNED TO THE GARNY... MAYBE TO MAKE UP. I DON'T KNOW! I SAW HER IN THE CROWD AND WAS AT HER SIDE WHEN ZOLTO WENT INTO HIS KNIFE-THROWING ACT...

THE... THE DANGER... FROM DOWN THE MIDWAY! IT'S TRUE... SOB... TRUE.

SHE LEFT THE GROUNDS CRYING! THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO! GLANTZ'S LITTLE JOKE HAD BEEN CARRIED TO ITS EXTREME! SHE NEVER CAME BACK! EVEN I BEGAN TO DISLIKE THE EVIL FREAK-SHOW OWNER! ONE EVENING...

IT WAS GOOD OF YOU TO INVITE ME TO YOUR CHOW TABLE, ZOLTO!

IT WAS GOOD OF YOU TO COME, MR. HASTINGS! FANNY!

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO FEED CORPUS! LET HIM FEED HIMSELF!

YES, MR. GLANTZ! I... I'M SORRY, CORPUS!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, FANNY!

I WAS HORRIFIED TO SEE SUCH HUMILI-
MUNITY! BUT...WHEN GLANTZ GOT UP
AND...

FEED YOURSELF,
CORPUS! LIKE...
THIS...

GLUG-ON-H!

IT WAS DISGUSTING! GLANTZ
HAD PUSHED THAT POOR HELPLESS
BOY'S FACE INTO HIS PLATE! I
STARTED TO OBJECT BUT ZOLTO
ACTED SOONER...

LEAVE HIM ALONE,
GLANTZ!

PUT DOWN
THAT KNIFE,
ZOLTO!



DON'T YOU EVER TORTURE THAT
BOY AGAIN, GLANTZ, OR I WILL
PUT DOWN THIS KNIFE--RIGHT
THROUGH YOUR UGLY SKULL...



I WAS DUMBSTRUCK WITH HORROR...POWERLESS TO
MOVE AS I WATCHED THE ENSUING SCENE! GLANTZ WAS
INFURIATED! HE HAD BEEN MADE A FOOL OF IN
FRONT OF THE TROUPE! HE RUSHED TO A CORNER OF
THE TENT...

THREATEN ME WITH A KNIFE...
WILL YOU?



IT WAS ALL OVER BEFORE I COULD DO ANYTHING!
GLANTZ SCOOPED UP TWO IRONS THAT THE FIRE-EATER
HAD BEEN HEATING FOR THE EVENING PERFORMANCE!
THEY WERE WHITE HOT! HE RUSHED AT THE PARALYZED
ZOLTO...

I'LL TEACH YOU!



WE SAT THERE...THE FREAKS AND I... AS GLANTZ
HAMMED THE WHITE-HOT IRONS INTO ZOLTO'S EYES!
HIS SHRIEK OF AGONIZING PAIN ECHOED UP AND DOWN THE
DESERTED MIDWAY...

YOU FOOL!
YOU'VE BLINDED
HIM!

HE... HE HAD
IT COMING!



ZOLTO LAY ON THE GROUND...HIS FACE CUPPED IN
HIS ARMS! HE WAS SCREAMING IN AGONY! THE SMELL
OF BURNED FLESH WAS ABOUT US! I FELT A WAVE OF
NAUSEA COME OVER ME! AS I LEFT THE TENT FOR A
BREATH OF FRESH AIR, I HEARD GLANTZ'S HYSTERI-
CAL VOICE...

GET OUT! GET! YOU'RE
THROUGH! YOU CAN'T DO YOUR
ACT NOW... **BLIND!** GET OUT
AND DON'T COME BACK!



The OLD WITCH'S NICHE

Hee Hee! Back for a second helping of that delicacy of devilishness called *The Haunt of Fear*? T'riffic! I'm still giddy as a *ghougirl* over the liberation of my mag from under V.K.'s mangy thumb, and a lotta you tender li'l lumpkins feel the same!

Dear Old Witch,

I am glad to hear that you are going to have your own comic. I bet *The Haunt of Fear* will be just as good as *Tales* and *Vault*. Congratulations!

Rolando Fogarty
Rochester, NY

Congrats on your new mag!! Got a question for ya. Are ya gonna reprint the four issues you've already reprinted? May your eye forever bulge!

Julie Black

Not till I've reprinted all the other *The Haunt of Fear* issues, at least!

Dear Old Witch,

You truly deserve your own mag, and to venture out of your miserable drab surroundings. Away from the Crypt-Keeper and the Vault-Keeper. Your stories keep me on the edge of my seat. Rot away, you old hag and keep them mags rolling.

Michelle Lee
Morphett Vale, South Australia
Australia

You tell the greatest stories. I read them before I go to bed. I especially liked "Reunion." She must have been really crazy to kiss a living corpse. How do you come up with these stories? Can you send me a picture of you? A REAL picture of you?

The Mistress of Horror
Bloomington, MN

Thing is, M.H., no camera made can survive snapping my hideous visage—the lens shatters and the film jumps out and exposes itself!

To that gruesome goblin, the Old Witch,

Morton Macawber from "For the Love of Death" (*The Vault of Horror* #4) sure had a peculiar hobby, but it still isn't quite as strange as my collection of human heads!

Dan Hackbarth
Brookfield, WI

Hackbarth, Hackbarth... a sister witch of mine is planning to tie the knot with a fine young zombie named Hackbarth. Must be from a branch of your family that undied out!

Dear Old Witch,

Did you ever think about having T-Shirts? If so, I'd

be the first to wear it! I really liked your story "For the Love of Death." I loved it to death!

Angela McAley
Worth, IL

How come in *The Vault of Horror* #3 in Grim Fairy Tales on the second page on the top left on the wall the words are upside down?

Jerome Barnett
Tyndale Air Force Base

So folks like you will spend 25¢ to write in and ask such questions!

Dear Old Witch,

Why can't I ever find *The Haunt of Fear* in any of the stores anymore? Sometimes when I'm reading *Tales From the Crypt* or *The Vault of Horror*, I think, whatever happened to *The Haunt of Fear*?

Gruesomely yours,
Lane Dixon
Murfreesboro, TN

I dunno, Lane. I thought we'd just started! I'd say time's moving backward there in Murfreesboro.

Dear Old Witch,

I'm going insane! In issue #4 of *The Vault of Horror*, the last story, "Wolf Bait," who did they throw out to be the sacrifice? My guess is it was the brat.

Jon Kierman
St. Paul, MN

The story "Wolf Bait" in your section of *The Vault of Horror* #4 was truly disturbing. Ever since I read it I've been trying very hard to figure out who was most likely to become "Purina Wolf Chow." It's taken me a lot of time but I think I know who it was: the old one. After all it was his meat that they threw to the wolves and he was the oldest except, maybe for Ivan but if they threw Ivan to the wolves who would drive the sleigh?

Grim Steve Singer
White Oak, PA

I got a recipe I would like to share with you. It's called Radish Rodent. First you cut two radishes, then you get two rat heads, spill their guts all over, then fry.

John Martinez
Corona, CA

Sounds like a good recipe for the Oogled Gourmet, my favorite show on ZBS (Zombie Broadcasting System)!

And now, dearie, it's time you get back to the real reason you're pawing through this pulpy periodical: the stories! But keep piling on those cards and letters to:

The Old Witch's Niche

P.O. Box 2079 • Prescott, AZ 86302 • (602) 776-1300

I THOUGHT OF CALLING THE POLICE, BUT I KNEW THAT IT WOULD DO NO GOOD! GLANTZ HAD ACTED IN SELF-DEFENSE! AND HE HAD THE FREAKS SO TERRORIZED, THEY WOULD BE AFRAID TO TESTIFY TO THE CONTRARY! A FEW WEEKS LATER...



YES, ZOLTO! IT IS I! WHY ARE YOU HIDING?

IT'S FANNY AND GORPUS AND XETAL AND THE REST! THEY'RE TAKING CARE OF ME TILL MY EYES HEAL...



THAT'S GOOD OF THEM ZOLTO!

YES! THEY BRING ME FOOD... AND THEY HIDE ME FROM MR. GLANTZ!



BUT... YOU CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS FOREVER, ZOLTO!

OH, NO! WE'RE WORKING ON THAT...



WORKING ON WHAT?

AN ACT! THEY'RE TEACHING ME! IT'S EASY... EASIER THAN I THOUGHT!



TEACHING YOU AN ACT?

YES! THROWING KNIVES AGAIN! IT'S EASY! THEY JUST FACE ME TOWARD THE BOARD... AND I TRY TO VISUALIZE MY PARTNER...



PARTNER?

OH, OF COURSE WE'RE ONLY USING A DUMMY! WHEN I GET REALLY GOOD, THEN... MAYBE...



ZOLTO WAS LIKE A LITTLE BOY AGAIN! HE BUBBLED AND CHATTERED ABOUT HIS NEW ACT AND HOW GOOD IT WOULD BE! I FELT SO SORRY FOR HIM...

SO YOU WON'T TELL MR. GLANTZ ABOUT IT, WILL YOU, MR. HASTINGS? AT LEAST NOT UNTIL I'M READY!

READY FOR WHAT?

READY TO SHOW IT TO HIM, OF COURSE! THEN... MAYBE HE'LL FORGIVE ME... AND TAKE ME BACK!

YES, ZOLTO! MAYBE HE... WILL... FORGIVE YOU!

I FELT AS IF I WANTED TO CRY! THE FREAKS HAD DONE WONDERS WITH ZOLTO! HE BORE NO MALICE! AND HE HAD SUCH CONFIDENCE IN HIMSELF...

I... I WONDER IF IT COULD BE POSSIBLE... IF HE REALLY COULD GO ON AGAIN... **THROWING KNIVES. BLIND!**

AND THEN... ONE NIGHT ABOUT A MONTH LATER... ZOLTO STUMBLED INTO MY OFFICE...

TONIGHT, MR. HASTINGS! I'M GOING TO PERFORM TONIGHT! FANNY TOLD ME MR. GLANTZ WOULD SEE MY ACT TONIGHT!

I'LL BE THERE, ZOLTO! I WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR ANYTHING!

AND I MEANT IT! THAT NIGHT I MADE MY WAY TO THE BREAK TENT! I GUESS THE AUDITION HAD ALREADY STARTED, FOR I HEARD LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE AS I ENTERED...

BRAVO, ZOLTO!

GOOD SHOT!

A LITTLE HIGHER THIS TIME...

I WATCHED FASCINATED! I HAD COME IN BEHIND THE BACKBOARD SO THAT I COULD SEE THEIR FACES! THEY WERE SMILING! IT HAD BEEN SO LONG SINCE I HAD SEEN ANY OF THEM SMILE...

NOW, AN ICE-PICK, ZOLTO! TO THE LEFT THIS TIME... JUST ABOUT AN INCH...

ZOLTO THREW THE ICE PICK! IT MADE A DULL SOUND AS IT HIT! ZOLTO WAS SMILING TOO, ALTHOUGH IT WAS A BLANK SMILE! A FACE WITHOUT EYES LACKS SO MUCH EXPRESSION...

GOOD, ZOLTO! HAH, HAH! GOOD!

ANOTHER ZOLTO! ANOTHER... THIS TIME HIGHER...

...AND TO THE RIGHT...

THE SECOND ICE-PICK WAS THROWN! IT, TOO, HIT TRUE! THEY ROARED WITH DELIGHT! I APPLAUDED TOO, ALTHOUGH I COULD NOT SEE FROM MY VANTAGE POINT HOW CLOSE IT CAME...

SOMEONE'S THERE! BEHIND THE BOARD!

IS THAT YOU, MR. HASTINGS?

YES, ZOLTO! IT IS I!



I DID NOT WANT TO MOVE! I HAD NOT SEEN SUCH HAPPINESS AMONG THE FREAKS FOR SO LONG THAT I WANTED TO STAY WHERE I COULD SEE THEIR FACES... NOT THE BOARD...

NOW A CLEAVER, ZOLTO... A CLEAVER...

DOWN A LITTLE THIS TIME...

AND OVER TO THE RIGHT AN INCH...



THE CLEAVER LANDED WITH A DULL THUD! I LOOKED DOWN! THERE WAS A POOL OF BLOOD AT THE BASE OF THE BACK-BOARD! A COLD SHIVER WENT DOWN MY SPINE...



I'M SHOWING MR. GLANTZ MY ACT! CAN YOU SEE WELL?

WELL ENOUGH, ZOLTO! GO AHEAD!



I LOOKED FOR GLANTZ! I WANTED TO SEE HIS EXPRESSION! I KNEW HE WOULD GO FOR THIS ACT! BUT... HE WAS NOT DOWN IN THE SEATS...

WHERE'S LOOZY ZOLTO!

HE'S WATCHING... ISN'T HE?

SURE... ZOLTO... SURE HE IS...



GLANTZ WAS GAGGED, AND TIED TO THE BOARD! AND ZOLTO'S AIM HAD BEEN HORRIBLY BAD... OR GOOD AS THE CASE MAY BE! HE HAD RARELY MISSED! THE FREAKS HAD GUIDED HIM WELL! I BREATHED A PRAYER AS I LEFT...

YES! HE'S WATCHING, ZOLTO! ANOTHER CLEAVER AND YOUR ACT WILL BE OVER...

LORD HAVE MERCY ON ON THEM...



HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S HENRY HASTINGS' STORY! STRIKING TALE, ENTICING FINISH! WELL, OLD LOOZY CERTAINLY HAD IT COMING... AND IT CAME! ICE-PICKS... KNIVES... CLEAVERS! OH, THAT LAST CLEAVER WAS THE TOPPER. HEH, HEH... GET IT? AFTER THAT, GLANTZ LOST HIS HEAD! WELL, SEE YOU IN MY OWN MAGAZINE, TALES FROM THE CRYPT! UNTIL THEN... DON'T LISTEN TO OLD KNIFE'S TALK!

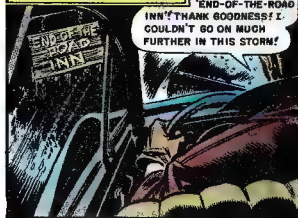


THIS TALE IS ACTUALLY ABOUT
TO HAPPEN TO YOU! I CALL IT...
A TASTY MORSEL!



YOU PEER THROUGH THE BLINDING DOWNPOUR AT THE SIGN! THE HEADLIGHTS OF YOUR CAR REFLECT ON THE WATER-SOAKED WOOD! YOU CAN BARELY MAKE OUT THE FADED LETTERS! THEY READ...

'END-OF-THE-ROAD
INN'! THANK GOODNESS! I
COULDN'T GO ON MUCH
FURTHER IN THIS STORM!



YOU TURN INTO THE TREE-LINED ROAD! UP
AHEAD, YOU CAN SEE THE LIGHTS OF THE INN
SHINING THROUGH THE HEAVY RAIN! YOU PULL
UP TO THE DOOR...

I HOPE THERE'S A ROOM
AVAILABLE!



IN ANSWER TO YOUR FEVERISH KNOCKING, THE DOOR IS OPENED BY A LARGE UGLY-FEATURED MAN...

YES?

I... I WAS CAUGHT IN THE STORM! I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD FIND LODGING HERE... FOR TONIGHT!

HIS BREADY EYES FOLLOW YOU AS HE STEPS ASIDE AND YOU ENTER THE GLOOMY INTERIOR...

IS THERE A ROOM FOR ME?

I THINK I HAVE ONE VACANT?

YOU STUDY YOUR HOST? HE IS TALL, ALMOST OVERSIZED? HE STEPS BEHIND THE DESK AND PUSHES A BATTERED BOOK... ITS PAGES YELLOWED WITH AGE... FORWARD...

IF YOU'LL SIGN THE REGISTER...

OF COURSE!

THEN THE INNKEEPER TAKES A KEY AND LEADS YOU UPSTAIRS TO YOUR ROOM! AS HE OPENS THE DOOR, THE MUSTY ODOR OF FOUL AIR BEARS YOUR NOSTRILS...

IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST LET ME KNOW!

THANK YOU! I WILL!

HE LEAVES! YOU LISTEN AS HIS HEAVY FOOTSTEPS DESCEND DARK STAIRS AND FADE OUT OF EARSHOT! YOU LOOK ABOUT YOU! THE ROOM IS SPARSELY FURNISHED! A THICK LAYER OF DUST COVERS EVERYTHING!

WELL! I GUESS I'LL TURN IN! DRIVING THROUGH THE RAIN HAS TIRED ME!

THE ROOM IS GOLD AND DARK! YOU SEARCH THE CLOSET FOR A BLANKET! THERE IS NONE! THE SINGLE THIN BED SPREAD WILL NOT BE ENOUGH! YOU LOOK FOR THE HOUSE PHONE...

BLAST IT! GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO DOWNSTAIRS AND ASK HIM FOR A BLANKET!

YOU OPEN THE DOOR OF YOUR ROOM AND LOOK OUT! THE HALL IS DARK AND DESERTED! YOU GO DOWNSTAIRS! THE LIGHT FROM THE FIREPLACE CASTS DANCING SHADOWS THROUGH THE LOBBY! THERE IS AN EERIE STRANGENESS ABOUT IT! AND THE INNKEEPER IS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN...

H-M-M-M! GUESS I'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL HE COMES BACK FROM WHEREVER HE IS! THIS CHAIR LOOKS INVITING...

YOU SIT DOWN! THE WARMTH OF THE CRACKLING FIRE FEELS GOOD! YOU GAZE AT THE LICKING FLAMES...

WONDER WHERE HE CAN BE...



THE FIRE LEAPS UPWARD! THE BURNING LOGS SPATTER AND SNAP! YOU SIGH! YES! THE DRIVE THROUGH THE RAIN HAS EXHAUSTED YOU...

I'D JUST AS SOON SPEND THE NIGHT DOWN HERE BEFORE THIS FIRE! IT'S SO... *WARM!*



SUDDENLY THE *BLOOD FREEZES* IN YOUR *VEINS!* FROM OUT OF THE DARKNESS COMES...

A *NOAN!*

GOD... WHAT A *HORRIBLE* SOUND!



YOU JUMP TO YOUR FEET! YOU STRAIN YOUR EARS... LISTENING! THEN YOU HEAR IT AGAIN! AN *AGO-NIZING NOAN!* IT MAKES THE HAIR ON YOUR NECK *CRAWL!*...

IT'S COMING FROM BEHIND THAT DOOR!



YOU STEAL TOWARD THE DOOR! YOU REACH OUT CAUTIOUSLY AND TWIST THE KNOB! IT SWINGS OPEN! STEPS LEAD DOWN INTO THE DARKNESS! FROM DOWN THERE... IN THE BLACKNESS... YOU HEAR IT AGAIN... BUT WEAKER...

I'VE GOT TO SEE WHAT IT IS! PERHAPS THE INNKEEPER...



YOU MOVE SLOWLY DOWN RICKETY STEPS! ALL IS SILENT NOW! YOU LISTEN! THEN *ANOTHER* SOUND REACHES YOUR EARS! A STEADY *Drip Drip*...

LIKE DROPS OF WATER... FALLING INTO A BUCKET...



YOU CURSE YOURSELF FOR NOT BRINGING A FLASHLIGHT! THE *Drip... Drip... DRIPPING* IS CLOSER NOW! YOU'RE ALMOST UPON IT! THEN YOU HEAR THE *WHIMPERING*... THE WEAK SAD WHIMPERING! YOU SEARCH YOUR POCKETS FOR A MATCH! YOU FIND ONE! YOU STRIKE IT! THE CELLAR FILLS WITH LIGHT!...

OH, LORD!

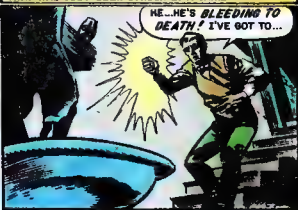


IT IS A MAN! A STRANGER... NOT THE INNKEEPER! HE LIES ON A TABLE...TIED THERE BY ROPES! HIS EYES ARE WIDE IN HORROR AS HE STARES AT THE BURNING MATCH! THEN YOU LOOK DOWN...

A PAN! A PAN HALF-FILLED WITH...BLOOD!



YOUR STOMACH HEAVES! YOU WRETCH WITH NAUSEA! THE MAN'S ARM HANGS LIMPLY...THE WRIST BLASHED! THE BLOOD TRICKLES DOWN HIS FINGERTIPS AND DRIPS INTO THE PAN! HE WHIMPERS...LIKE A DOG THAT HAS JUST BEEN STRUCK BY A CAR...



THE MATCH BURNS YOU AND YOU DROP IT IN PAIN! THE DARKNESS CLOSES IN! THE STEADY DRIPPING CONTINUES! SUDDENLY...

THE CELLAR DOOR! SOMEONE'S COMING!



YOU HIDE! YOU COWER BEHIND A PILE OF BOXES! A MAN THUMPS DOWN THE STEPS! HE CARRIES A LANTERN! HIS EYES GLEAM IN THE FLICKERING YELLOW LIGHT...



THE INNKEEPER!

YOU WATCH, TOO FRIGHTENED TO MOVE! HE APPROACHES THE MAN TIED TO THE TABLE! THE WHIMPERING HAS CEASED NOW! EVEN THE DRIPPING HAS SLOWED CONSIDERABLY! A GREEPING HORROR TELLS YOU...



HE... HE'S DEAD!

THE INNKEEPER NOODS HIS HEAD AS IF IN SILENT AGREEMENT! HE UNTIES THE LIMP BODY AND SLINGS IT OVER HIS SHOULDERS! HE CARRIES IT THROUGH A DOORWAY...



I...I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE! THE INNKEEPER... HE...HE'S A MANIAC!

YOU START TOWARD THE STAIRS! YOU AVOID LOOKING AT THE PAN ON THE FLOOR! THEN YOU STOP...STARTLED! A MOTOR HAS STARTED! IT THROBS...MATCHING THE RACING BEAT OF YOUR OWN HEART! YOUR EYES FOLLOW THE SOUND...



IT...IT LOOKS LIKE A FROZEN-FOOD-LOCKER!



SKELETON

It was obvious that he was a goner and would be dead within five minutes. His coat and shirt were slashed brutally and blood came pouring out of him in torrents. His eyes were wide and glassy, his mouth moved instinctively but the only sounds which came to his greyish lips were gurgled and incoherent. And then suddenly his body stopped quivering for a moment and he looked up with a glint of recognition at the Police officers surrounding him.

"Out at Fairview..." he whispered, and the Police Stenographer pressed closer, notebook ready. "F-Fairview... the cemetery," continued the man with the knife slashes draining his lifeblood away. "The headstone... it's marked... P-Paul Kleeg..."

The Homicide Captain leaned over the dying man. "Who are you... how did you get to Police Headquarters? Who stabbed you... where are they?"

The man's mouth moved convulsively and his words were barely audible. "M-My name... Weldon. T-Two days ago... got out of State Prison. Came here to see Kleeg's grave... open it... make sure he was dead like papers said. Kleeg was in on bank job with me ten years ago... I was grabbed... he got away. Then I heard he died... eight years ago... came to make sure!"

A bubble of blood burst on the man's lips and a shudder passed down his body, but after a moment he continued: "Opened his grave... c-case all rotten and full of weeds..."

only a skeleton left there... grinning as if Kleeg was laughing at me! I bent over skeleton... to see if he was buried with ring or any other jewelry I could use... when his hand reached out and grabbed me! I-I couldn't move... then he stabbed me with some kind of blade he had... some kind of knife..."

The man's head fell back and a last tortured gasp escaped him. He was dead. The Captain gave his orders in a hushed voice: "Have the Morgue pick 'im up right away! Name's Weldon, eh? Must be the one listed among this month's releases from up-river. Come on... we'll saunter over to Kleeg's grave out at Fairview! Craziest story I ever heard... imagine, a skeleton stabbing a man to death!"

The circle of Police stared into the opened grave. The Captain spoke first, as he moved down to it, past the cemetery workmen who had shovelled away the dirt that covered it. "A skeleton... just like Weldon described it. And it looks as if it has been dug up very recently..."

"Craziest story any of us ever heard!" a Sergeant said aloud. "What probably happened is that Weldon went off his rocker and stabbed himself! Who ever heard of a skeleton...?"

At that moment the Captain looked up from the decayed coffin, his face chalk-white. "His story is crazy," he said, "and only an insane man would believe it! But just look at THIS!"

The officers craned forward. There, grasped in the fleshless hand of Paul Kleeg's skeleton, was a blade several inches long. Rusted so completely that it had almost merged with the long tapering bones which clutched it! And covering the entire length of that corroded blade was a sticky dark brown substance. Blood, just beginning to dry!

A MORBID CURIOSITY DRIVES YOU FORWARD! YOU HESITATE BEFORE IT... BUT THEN YOU LIFT THE LID...

NO! NO! LORD... LORD, NO!



INSIDE THE REFRIGERATED LOOKER IS A BARREL... A BARREL OF REDDISH-BROWN LIQUID! A BARREL OF BLOOD! YOU SLAM THE LID SHUT AND TURN... LEANING ON THE LOOKER FOR BALANCE...

HE... HE'S A VAMPIRE! HE COLLECTS THE BLOOD OF HIS VICTIMS!



YOU START TOWARD THE STAIRWAY... BUT THEN YOU HEAR THE INNKEEPER RETURNING! YOU JUST HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO HIDE! HE ENTERS THE ROOM... HIS EYES GLEAMING... HIS LIPS MOIST! HE PICKS UP THE PAN OF RED LIQUID FROM THE FLOOR...



THEN... AS YOU WATCH IN TERROR... HE OPENS THE FREEZER AND POURS THE CONTENTS OF THE PAN INTO THE BARREL...



THEN HE BEGINS TO SHUT THE LID. HE STOPS! HE OPENS IT AGAIN! HIS CRUEL LIPS SPREAD IN AN EVIL GRIN! HE REACHES FOR A TIN CUP HANGING ON THE WALL...



HE STOOPS OVER, REACHING INTO THE BARREL! YOU HEAR THE SPLASHING OF THE SICKLY RED-BROWN LIQUID AS HE DIPS INTO IT...



HE... HE'S GOING TO...

YOU WATCH HIM BRING THE CUP TO HIS LIPS AND DRINK IT DOWN! A SMALL STREAM TRICKLES DOWN HIS CHIN... YOU SCREAM...



IT IS TOO MUCH FOR YOU! YOU DASH TOWARD THE STAIRS SHRIEKING! YOUR HEAD SPINS...THE STAIRS SEEM TO MELT BEFORE YOU! YOU SPRAWL, HALF-WAY UP!

YOU...YOU'VE BEEN SPYING ON ME!



IN A FLASH HE IS UPON YOU...HIS STRONG HANDS HOLDING YOU! YOU'RE WEAK WITH FEAR AND NAUSEA! YOU CANNOT FIGHT HIM...

I HADN'T PLANNED ON ANOTHER VICTIM TONIGHT!



HE CARRIES YOU TO THE TABLE! HE TIES YOU DOWN! YOU SCREAM...

IT IS USELESS TO CRY OUT! WE ARE QUITE ALONE IN THE INN! HE WAS THE ONLY OTHER GUEST...



YOU WATCH, WIDE-EYED, AS HE BRINGS THE PAN AND PLACES IT UNDER THE TABLE...UNDER YOUR HANGING ARM...

YOU...YOU'RE INHUMAN...A MAD FIEND!

PERHAPS!



THE KNIFE BLADE GLITTERS IN THE LANTERN LIGHT! HE COMES TOWARD YOU...BRANDISHING IT...

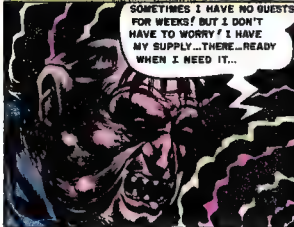
HAVE PITY...SOB... PITY...

I NEED YOUR BLOOD! I MUST SAVE IT...



THE KNIFE BURNS AS THE GOLD BLADE SLICES INTO YOUR WRIST! YOUR HEAD SWIMS! YOU CAN HEAR HIM TALKING...AND THE STEADY DRIP... DRIP...

SOMETIMES I HAVE NO GUESTS FOR WEEKS! BUT I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY! I HAVE MY SUPPLY...THERE...READY WHEN I NEED IT...



YOUR HEAD POUNDS NOW! THE ROOM WEAVES BEFORE YOU! YOU FEEL YOURSELF SLIPPING...SLIPPING INTO THE BLACKNESS OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS...WEAK... DIZZY...THE DRIP...DRIP... DRIP...



SUDDENLY YOU OPEN YOUR EYES! YOU SQUINT!
THE FIRE IS LOW NOW...BUT GLOWING WARM!
YOU ARE IN THE CHAIR BEFORE IT...



YOU BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF! YOU'D BEEN DREAMING THE
WHOLE THING! YOU LOOK UP! THE INNKEEPER IS SMILING
DOWN AT YOU...



SUDDENLY YOU HEAR IT! THE STEADY
DRIPPING! YOU START TO RISE! YOU
CANNOT MOVE! YOU'RE TIED TO THE
CHAIR! AND BENEATH YOUR SLASHED
WRIST IS A PAN...HALF-FILLED WITH
BLOOD...



THE INNKEEPER'S SMILE VANISHES
AS HE SCOWLS AT YOU! THERE IS
DISGUST ON HIS FACE...



YOU'RE DRAINING MY BLOOD!
YOU'RE GOING TO PUT IT IN THE
BARREL... DOWNSTAIRS... IN THE
FREEZE-CHEST! YOU ARE
A VAMPIRE...



YOU'RE *WRONG*, MY FRIEND! I AM
NO VAMPIRE! I HATE BLOOD! I
CAN'T STAND MEAT THAT TASTES
OF BLOOD! I AM A GHOUL! I
LIVE ON BLOODLESS...FLESH!
I HAVE A FREEZE-LOCKER
DOWNSTAIRS...BUT IT'S
WELL STOCKED WITH DEAD
HUMAN FLESH!



A GHOUL! THE DREAM... REALITY...THE SAME...YET
DIFFERENT! THE BLACKNESS IS CLOSING IN ON YOU
NOW! THE DRIPPING IS SLOWING UP! PERHAPS
THIS TOO IS BUT A DREAM! PERHAPS YOU WILL
WAKE UP FROM *THIS* NIGHTMARE, ALSO! THE
LAST THING YOU SEE...BEFORE EVERYTHING FADES
...IS THE INNKEEPER...AND HIS MEAT OLEAVER...



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! AN INCREASE IN THE POPULATION OF A GREAT CITY'S TEEMING MILLIONS IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE STATISTICIAN... BUT TO THE SANITATION DEPT. IT MEANS ONLY THAT MUCH MORE GARBAGE TO COLLECT...



THE CITY HAS A HUGE, EFFICIENT SYSTEM FOR THE REMOVAL OF TRASH, AND ONE OF ITS MOST RESPECTED ASSETS IS ITS FLEET OF STREAMLINED TRUCKS!



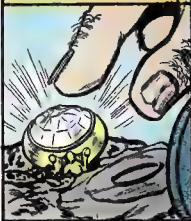
THESE PROUD VEHICLES COVER EVERY PART OF THE METROPOLIS, AND THERE ARE BUT FEW ITEMS THAT CANNOT BE CRUSHED, BROKEN AND HACKED TO BITS BY THEIR GLEAMING, WHIRLING BLADES...



HAVING EATEN THEIR FILL OF GARBAGE, THEY AT ONCE TRAVEL TO THE CITY DUMP AND PURR CONTENTEDLY WHILE THEY DISCHARGE THEIR CARGO.



HERE IS WHERE EVERY BIT OF THE CITY'S COLLECTED WASTE IS BROUGHT. AND IT IS HERE, IN THIS SCAVENGERS' PARADISE, THAT ONE MAY FIND...



...ALMOST ANYTHING!



HEH, HEH! QUITE A *SHOCKING* THING TO FIND, ISN'T IT? NATURALLY, THE MAN ALMOST *FAINTED* UPON VIEWING HIS HORRID DISCOVERY! BUT HE RACED MADLY TO INFORM THE POLICE... *AFTER* HE HAD REMOVED THE RING AND STUFFED IT INTO HIS POCKET, OF COURSE! HOW, YOU MAY ASK, DID THE HAND HAPPEN TO BE LYING IN THE CITY DUMP? HEH! HEH! WELL, THERIN LIES OUR STORY! IT'S A *GRIPPING* TALE AND I CALL IT...

SEEDS of DEATH!



LET'S GO BACK IN TIME TO WHERE OUR STORY *REALLY* BEGAN... TO A SMALL FARM ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE LARGE CITY.



ON THIS PARTICULAR FARM LIVED THE OWNER, BASIL WOODS... HIS WIFE CONNIE...



...AND A HIRED HAND NAMED CLIFF!

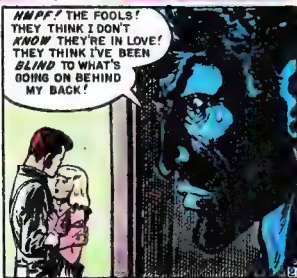


OH, CLIFF... CLIFF! HE'S SO *GRUEL*!

CONNIE, DARLING, IF HE HITS YOU AGAIN... SO HELP ME, I THINK I'LL *KILL* HIM!



HMFF! THE FOOLS! THEY THINK I DON'T *KNOW* THEY'RE IN LOVE! THEY THINK I'VE BEEN *BLIND* TO WHAT'S GOING ON BEHIND MY BACK!



NO MAN CAN TAKE MY WIFE FROM ME AND LIVE! I'LL FIX THE DIRTY HOME-WRECKER WHEN THE TIME COMES!



HEH, HEH! WELL, THAT'S THE SITUATION, DEAR READERS... THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE! TIME PASSED... AND BASIL WAITED PATIENTLY, UNTIL ONE DAY...

SURE, MRS. WOODS!

CLIFF, WHILE YOU'RE IN TOWN TODAY, WOULD YOU BUY ME SOME GARDENIA SEEDS? I WANT TO PLANT THEM IN THE GARDEN!



HE'LL BE IN THE CITY ALL DAY... WON'T BE BACK TILL LATE TONIGHT! AND HE'LL PROBABLY TAKE THE SHORT-CUT 'ROSS THE FIELD TO THE HOUSE...
HMM-M...



... AND SO, LATE THAT NIGHT...

'EVENING, CLIFF! DID YOU GET MY WIFE'S GARDENIA SEEDS?

EH? OH... HI, MR. WOODS! YES, I HAVE THEM RIGHT HERE!



HERE THEY ARE! WANT TO TAKE A LOOK?



¡GASP! THERE... IT'S DONE! NOW TO BURY HIM... ¡GASP!... RIGHT HERE! HEE, HEE! IN TIME TO COME, HIS BODY'LL MAKE FINE FERTILIZER FOR THIS FIELD! ¡GASP!





HEH, HEH! YES, THE DEED WAS DONE! NOW BASIL WOODS FELT CERTAIN HIS WIFE WOULD SOON FORGET HER SILLY LOVE AFFAIR. THE NEXT MORNING...



I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT! CLIFF HASN'T RETURNED FROM THE CITY YET! I HOPE HE'S ALL RIGHT!

CLIFF HASN'T RETURNED? TCH, TCH!

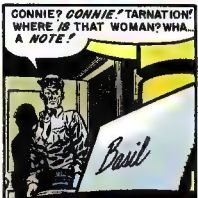


HA, HA! SHE'S WORRIED! BUT AS THE DAYS PASS, SHE'LL FORGET HIM... SHE'LL FORGET!



WELL, THE DAYS DID PASS BUT CONNIE DIDN'T FORGET! AND ONE EVENING AS BASIL RETURNED FROM THE FIELDS...

CONNIE? CONNIE? TARNATION! WHERE IS THAT WOMAN? WHA... A NOTE!



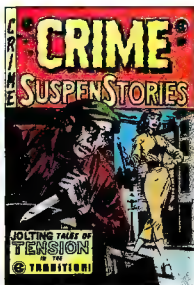
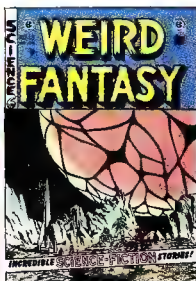
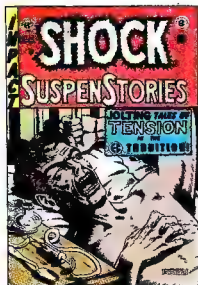
*Basil -
Forgive me. I have gone to the city to search for Cliff. I simply can't stand worrying about him any longer. I must find him. Connie*

THAT BLASTED NO-GOOD! I'LL TEACH HER TO RUN OFF LIKE THIS! I'LL GO TO THE CITY AND DRAG HER BACK BY THE HAIR OF HER HEAD!



A RARE E.C. OFFER

Seventeen years ago a small publishing company called **East Coast Comix** reprinted a number of the original E.C.'s in full color as regular 32-page comic books. Without national distribution the market was not able to sustain their continuation. Shortly after they ceased production we bought the remaining small inventory, realizing they would become **real collector's items** someday. With the return of E.C. through Gladstone, that day has come! None of the material in these 1973 and '74 reprints has appeared or is scheduled to appear in any Gladstone title. The **Shock SuspenStories** comics also have no place on our schedule. The following are available individually while the **very limited supply lasts**.



- ☐ **Shock**
SuspenStories 12
December, 1953
\$6.50

- ☐ **Weird**
Fantasy 13
May, 1952
\$5.50

- ☐ **Crime**
SuspenStories 25
October, 1954
\$5.50

Drug abuse is dealt with for one of the first times in comics in the powerful Joe Orlando effort, "The Monkey." Reed Crandall's "The Kidnapper" generated mail from many parents. Wally Wood touches on suicide in "The Fall Guy." And a murderous alcoholic is portrayed in "Deadline" by Jack Kamen.

Special issue with **two** tales illustrated by Wallace Wood, including "Home to Stay," an unforgettable adaptation of two Ray Bradbury short stories. E.C.'s science fiction and horror editor/artist Al Feldstein has a bio with photo.

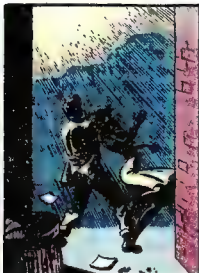
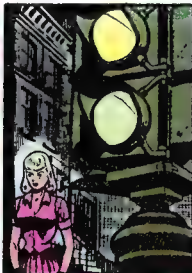
Jack Kamen's lead deals with multiple murder; Reed Crandall's story involves a knife and some "cutting up" during a prison break; Bernie Krugstein's effort chronicles madness; and George Evans' yarn weaves brutal fiction of a sadistic police lieutenant.

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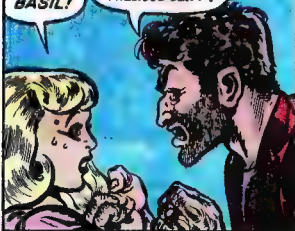
GOODBYE, MY CHILD. I'M SORRY
I COULDN'T BE OF ANY HELP,
BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN MY
SON FOR QUITE SOME
TIME!

THANK YOU
GOODBYE...



BASIL!

YAS, IT'S ME! DIDJA THINK
IT WAS GONNA BE YOUR
PRECIOUS GLIFF?



BASIL,
PLEASE!
DON'T
HIT ME!

HIT YOU! WHY, I'LL BEAT YOUR
STUPID HEAD IN! I'LL TEACH YOU
TO RUN OFF!

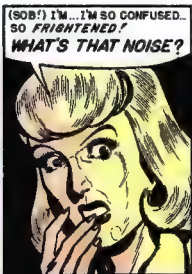


DON'T
TOUCH
ME!

YOU AND YOUR PRECIOUS
GLIFF! WELL, YOU'LL NEVER
SEE HIM AGAIN!

YOU STAY
AWAY FROM
ME! DON'T
TOUCH ME!







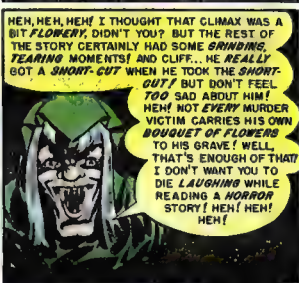
HEH! NATURALLY, CONNIE WAS UNAWARE OF HER HUSBAND'S FATE, AND FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, SHE SEARCHED THE CITY IN VAIN... FOR CLIFF...



SHE STOOD TRANSFIXED IN HORROR! BEFORE HER, NOT TEN FEET FROM WHERE SHE STOOD, WAS A MOUND OF **GARDENIAS!** ALL AT ONCE, THERE CAME THE SHOCKING REALIZATION THAT AT LAST SHE HAD FOUND... HER PRECIOUS CLIFF.



FINALLY, SHE RETURNED TO THE FARM. SAD AND WEARY, SHE TROD THE SHORT-CUT ACROSS THE FIELD TOWARD THE HOUSE. SUDDENLY, SHE STOPPED... HER EYES WIDENED!

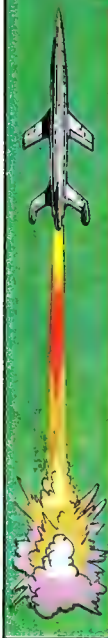




WEIRD



SCIENCE-FANTASY

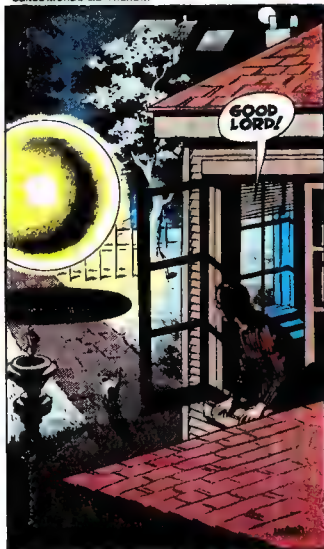




Frazetta's unretouched cover illustration as it was originally drawn (and rejected) for Famous Funnies #217

THE CHOSEN ONE

I HAD BEEN ASLEEP, BUT MY SLEEP HAD BEEN FITFUL, FILLED WITH THE VAGUE, FORMLESS STUFF OF TROUBLED DREAMS. BESIDE ME, MY WIFE BREATHED SOFTLY. IN THE NEXT ROOM, MY SON SLEPT PEACEFULLY, HIS DOG AT THE FOOT OF HIS BED. ALL SEEMED WELL...AS IT SHOULD BE. YET, THE THIN TENDRILS OF THE FEARS WITH WHICH I HAD LIVED FOR SO LONG PLUCKED AT MY BRAIN. I AROSE AND WENT TO THE WINDOW, AS IF SOMETHING...SOME SIXTH SENSE...DREW ME THERE...



HOW SHALL I DESCRIBE THAT AWFUL MOMENT. I SAW THE BALL...A GLOWING SHIMMERING SPHERE OF LIGHT...HOVERING OVER THE LAWN OF MY SUB-URBAN HOME. I SAW IT SETTLE LIGHTLY. AND I THOUGHT THAT I WAS STILL DREAMING...



AS I WATCHED IN DISBELIEF AND TERRORIZED FASCINATION, I SAW TWO PEOPLE WITH LIMBS LIKE LIQUID SILVER AND FACES LIKE THE FACES OF ANGELS EMERGE FROM THE GLOWING BALL...



IT WAS NO DREAM! I KNEW THAT NOW. I SLIPPED INTO A ROBE AND WENT TO MEET THEM...

I HEARD. THEIR LIPS DID NOT MOVE AND YET I HEARD THEIR VOICES, AS IF THEIR THOUGHTS LEAPED OVER INVISIBLE WIRES FROM THEIR MINDS TO MINE. I HEARD AND I KNEW WHY THEY WERE HERE. THEY'D COME FOR MY SON...

NO! NO! YOU CAN'T TAKE HIM! I WON'T LET YOU! YOU WON'T!

THERE IS NO CHOICE! WE MUST!

HIS CALL REACHED OUT TO US...ACROSS THE ENDLESS SEAS OF SPACE...FROM HIS WORLD TO OURS. WE COULD NOT DENY THAT CALL.

NO! THIS... THIS IS SOME KIND OF MONSTROUS PRACTICAL JOKE! THERE ARE NO OTHER INHABITED WORLDS! NOTHING...NOTHING CAN REACH ACROSS SPACE!



WORDS...WORDS... I SPOKE THEM, AND YET I DID NOT BELIEVE THEM AS I SPOKE. I KNEW. I HAD KNOWN FOR SOME TIME. AND THE EYES THAT LOOKED AT ME WERE SOFT AND FILLED WITH PITY...

OUR SHIP HAS CROSSED SPACE AS HIS CALL CROSSED SPACE. YOU KNOW THAT HE DOES NOT BELONG IN YOUR WORLD! THAT MUCH WE CAN GRASP FROM YOUR THOUGHTS, JUMBLED THOUGH THEY ARE!



WITH US, HE WOULD BE AMONG HIS OWN KIND. HE WOULD BE HAPPY. WOULD YOU DENY HIM HAPPINESS?

DO NOT FEAR FOR HIM. WE WILL GIVE HIM ALL THE LOVE WHICH YOU COULD GIVE HIM...AND MORE. FOR HIS SAKE, LET US PASS!



THEY SAY THAT IN A CRISIS, A MAN'S LIFE FLASHES BEFORE HIS EYES IN A MOMENT'S TIME. I HESITATED THEN, IN MY CRISIS... ONLY FOR AN INSTANT... AND IN THAT INSTANT, IT WAS AS IF TIME ROLLED BACKWARDS... TEN YEARS...

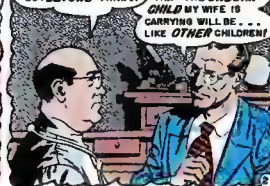
YOU'RE... YOU'RE CERTAIN, DOCTOR? I'M... STILL NORMAL?

IT WOULD APPEAR SO, PROFESSOR FULLER!



AS FAR AS TESTS AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS CAN SHOW, YOU ARE QUITE NORMAL. BUT BEYOND THAT...

BEYOND THAT, YOU WOULDN'T TAKE AN OATH ON IT, YOU WOULDN'T SWEAR THAT THE UNBORN CHILD MY WIFE IS CARRYING WILL BE... LIKE OTHER CHILDREN!



SWEAR! HOW COULD I SWEAR, PROFESSOR? YOU ARE A MAN OF SCIENCE... AN EXPERT ON ATOMIC FISSION. FOR TWO YEARS, YOU'VE WORKED ON THE ATOMIC PILE AT ALAMAGORDO. IF YOU WERE IN MY PLACE, WOULD YOU SWEAR AN OATH?

N-NO! I GUESS NOT! WE...WE KNOW SO **LITTLE** OF THE EFFECTS OF RADIO-ACTIVITY ON THE **GENES** AND **CHROMOSOMES**...



WE KNOW SO LITTLE. WE TOYED WITH GIANT FORCES AND WE LIVED IN FEAR. AT LEAST, I LIVED IN FEAR. BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO. SO I WAITED. I WENT BACK TO WORK. AND EVEN AS I WORKED, I PRAYED THAT MY WORK HAD NOT MADE MY CHILD A MONSTER...

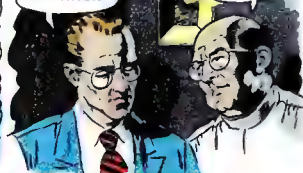


NO, MY SON WAS NOT DEFORMED. BUT... HOW MANY INFANTS LOOK UP AT YOU OUT OF EYES THAT SEEM TO SEE THROUGH YOU? HOW MANY CHILDREN WALK AT SIX MONTHS... SPEAK AT ONE YEAR... READ AT THE AGE OF TWO?



DOCTOR!... I... I KNOW I'M BEING **FOOLISH**, BUT I CAN'T HELP **THINKING** ABOUT IT. WHAT IF THE CHILD IS A... A **FREAK**? A **MUTANT**? IT WOULD BE MY FAULT!

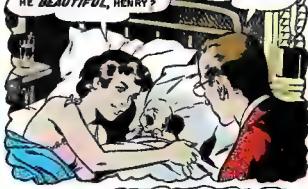
YOU DON'T KNOW FOR **CERTAIN** IF YOUR WORK ON THE PILE HAS **AFFECTED** YOU, PROFESSOR. WHY **ANTICIPATE**? WHY NOT **WAIT**... AND **SEE**?



I PRAYED... AND AT FIRST, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT MY PRAYERS HAD BEEN ANSWERED. WHEN MY SON WAS BORN, HE HAD NO EXTRA LIMBS, NO VISIBLE DEFORMITIES.

THE DOCTOR SAYS HE'S **PERFECT**! ISN'T... ISN'T HE **BEAUTIFUL**, HENRY?

YES, LAURA, HE'S... **BEAUTIFUL**!



LAURA! DID YOU SEE? HE WAS **READING**. I TELL YOU! **READING THIS!**

REALLY, HENRY? I KNOW HOW PROUD YOU ARE OF BOBBY! BUT, **READING!** COME, NOW! HE WAS JUST LOOKING AT THE **PICTURES**, DEAR. HOW COULD HE **KNOW** HOW TO READ?



I DON'T KNOW *HOW*, BUT HE *DOES*. LAURA, HE'S... HE'S NOT *LIKE* OTHER KIDS. THE WAY HE SPEAKS, THE WAY HE *WATCHES* EVERYTHING, YOU *MUST* HAVE NOTICED!

OF COURSE I'VE NOTICED. BOBBY IS EXCEPTIONALLY *BRIGHT* FOR HIS AGE. BUT DON'T YOU DARE *TELL* HIM SO, DEAR. YOU'LL *SPOIL* HIM!

LAURA HAD NEVER BEGUN TO UNDERSTAND. BUT I WAS RIGHT. A MUTATION IS NOT ALWAYS OF THE BODY. OTHER BOYS PLAYED. OTHER BOYS ROMPED. BUT NOT MY SON. HIS INTERESTS WERE OF THE MIND...

BOBBY, IT'S SUCH A NICE DAY. WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO PLAY BALL WITH THE OTHER BOYS?

BALL? NOT PARTICULARLY, DAD!

BUT YOU HAVE NO *FRIENDS*. YOU NEVER *BOTHER* WITH OTHER CHILDREN. DON'T YOU EVER GET *LONELY*?

NO, DAD! I DON'T GET *LONELY*! I'M PERFECTLY *HAPPY*!



MY SON WAS SO...SO COLD. CAN YOU UNDERSTAND? THERE WAS NO MIRACLE. HE DIDN'T SUDDENLY REVEAL HIS GENIUS. HE WAS TOO CLEVER FOR THAT. BUT I KNOW WHAT LAY BEHIND THOSE ICY EYES OF HIS...

WELL, WHY DON'T YOU GET *LONELY*? BY HEAVENS, WHAT KIND OF A CHILD ARE YOU? DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT ANYTHING? ARE YOU SO SUPERIOR TO THE REST OF US?

HENRY!



WHAT ON EARTH HAS GOTTEN INTO YOU, HENRY? YOU SOUND AS THOUGH YOU THOUGHT BOBBY *HATED* US. WHAT WAS HE *DONE*?

NOTHING! THAT'S JUST IT! *NOTHING!* MAYBE HE *DOESN'T* HATE US. MAYBE HE ONLY FEELS *SORRY* FOR US. I DON'T KNOW. BUT I KNOW *ONE* THING! I'M SICK OF BEING LOOKED AT AS THOUGH I WERE A *WORM*!



HE WASN'T ONE OF US. I SAW THAT CLEARLY. MY SON WAS WHAT ONE DAY MEN MIGHT BE. HE ENDURED US, KNOWING HIS OWN SUPERIORITY. BUT I LOVED HIM. HE WAS STILL MY SON. AND MY LOVE MADE ME TENSE AND IRRITABLE...

WELL, GET *ON* WITH IT! I HAVEN'T *GOT* ALL DAY! OR DO YOU THINK I'M TRYING TO SNEAK OUT SOME *U-235*?

ATOM PILE
AUTHOR
PERSON ONLY



SORRY, SIR. YOU KNOW THE REGULATION. WE HAVE TO CHECK EVERY PERSON WORKING ON THE PILE. YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO RADIATION.

MIGHT HAVE BEEN! YOU *FOOL*! WHAT GOOD IS THAT GEIGER COUNTER *NOW*? THE DAMAGE HAS BEEN *DONE*!



A NEW BEGINNING



The man lifted his head from his arms and looked dazedly through the window as twilight fell. All 'round, the earth lay still, waiting. A cool breeze stirred the new leaves and a sigh, long and tortured, escaped his lips. He was not old, yet not young either, for pain had carved deep furrows across his forehead and along his cheeks. He had known more despair than just one lifetime could bring.

He shifted now, in his seat, and tired fingers groped toward the instruments on the panel before him. He touched each dial, each button, each lever, gently, and then his arms fell numbly into his lap.

"Fool boy," he thought. "Fool, fool, FOOL!" the last, a hoarse scream... shattering the silence... startling him so that minutes passed, and he still trembled. He closed his eyes and saw...

... a boy, himself, eons ago... a boy laughing, glowing with excitement, bursting with his secret, yet not daring to confide it to anyone. The delicious agony as the days crept by toward THE day. The day the newspapers said the rocket would take off. Over and over again, the boy lived his plan, 'til THAT day, when he slowed away, hidden amongst the huge crates of instruments. The ecstasy of fear that was his 'til blast-off. And yet, they did not find him 'til they were three days out from Earth.

He remembered landing on the planet... exploring it in the suit they had cut down to fit him. The men were very patient with him, and explained each phase of the exploration and the importance of each new discovery. The youth's heart sang. His mind soaked up every word.

And then came the terror of the illness. Two of the scientists, the oldest of the group, died while they were still on the planet. Three more, middle-aged, succumbed. And then, after a night of arguing, the project was abandoned, as fear of dying on a strange planet and a longing for the loved ones on Earth triumphed over scientific curiosity.

But the return was too late to save the lives of the rest of the men. One by one they died, the last one with a prayer for the last survivor... the boy, now full grown, made old before his time by the deaths of his friends. The controls, set with care, and rechecked before the last scientist died, brought the young man closer to home. His sanity remained with him only because of the memory of his parents, his friends, and the whole wonderful world of beautiful people awaiting him.

And then, the landing. The anguish of that morning remained. At its recall, the man flinched, and a gasp stirred the air in the ship where he sat, as memory of that morning stabbed him again.

The earth was quiet and grey. There was nothing but flatness before him as far as the eye could see... flatness covered with a fine grey ash. Not a building stood, not a bird soared through the sky, and not a leaf clung to the charred branches of the few trees that stood. It had taken hours, before he remembered. The BOMB! They had used it! And what most men had scoffed at, and a few, wiser than the rest, had feared, had come to pass. Chain reaction! Uncontrollable!

And there was nothing left... no one to comfort the boy come home.

That was the part that hurt so unbearably. After weeks of hope, the realization, the acceptance. He was alone... the last man on Earth. Alone... and when the trees came back to life, there was no one with whom to share the beauty of Spring. There was no joy at the first blades of grass. There was no one. No one but the man.

The creases in his face deepened as he fought the urge to cry. But there was no one to see the tears. No one to hold him, to comfort him, to love him. So, once more, he gave way. The tears poured down his cheeks. His eyes were twin pictures of his agony. He cried, and then, aloud, "OH, GOD. SOMEONE... SOMEONE, PLEASE!"

At last, exhausted, he stopped sobbing. And then, Adam lay down his head, and slept.

I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT DAY. I'D SNARLED AT THE GUARD OUT OF MY OWN MISERY...BECAUSE MY SON WAS NOT MY SON...BECAUSE I WANTED HIM TO LOVE ME AS I LOVED HIM. THERE HAD TO BE A WAY TO HIS HEART...

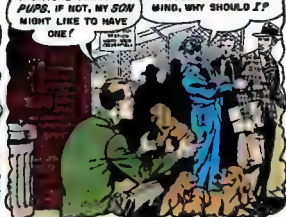


GUARD! THAT DOG! DO THOSE PUPS BELONG TO ANYONE?

ONLY TO HER, GIR. QUEENIE'S JUST A STRAY! BEEN HANGIN' AROUND HERE EVER SINCE THE PLACE WAS PUT UP! SHE'S...

I DIDN'T ASK FOR THE DOG'S LIFE HISTORY! I ONLY WANT TO KNOW IF ANYONE OWNED THE PUPS. IF NOT, MY SON MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE ONE!

HELP YOURSELF. WE'VE BEEN WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH THEM. IF QUEENIE DOESN'T MIND, WHY SHOULD I?



THE IRONY OF IT. I BROUGHT MY SON A PET. I TRIED TO BUY MY WAY BEHIND THE WALL OF ICE BEHIND HIM. AND INSTEAD, DAY BY DAY, I SAW FINAL PROOF THAT I'D FATHERED SOMETHING BEYOND MY UNDERSTANDING...

MY SON AND THE DOG HAD BECOME INSEPARABLE. BUT IT WASN'T THE WAY IT WAS WITH OTHER BOYS AND THEIR DOGS. BOBBY WOULD JUST LOOK INTO DUKE'S EYES...AND HE'D KNOW...

HE'D GO OUT...AND RETURN... WITH WHATEVER THE DOG SEEMED TO WANT...



LAURA, YOU... YOU SAW THAT, DIDN'T YOU? BOBBY JUST... JUST LOOKED AT DUKE AND HE *KNEW* THAT DUKE WAS THIRSTY. HE JUST LOOKED AT THE DOG!

I KNOW, DEAR. REMARKABLE, ISN'T IT? BOBBY SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO READ DUKE'S MIND. IT'S AMAZING THE WAY HE'S TRAINED THAT DOG!

TRAINED? BOBBY HADN'T TRAINED DUKE! HE'D CONTROLLED HIM. HE KNEW WHAT DUKE WAS THINKING... THE WAY HE PROBABLY KNEW WHAT I WAS THINKING... WHAT LAURA WAS THINKING...

DAD, WOULD YOU OPEN THE BACK DOOR? DUKE'S ON THE STEPS AND HE WANTS TO COME IN!

HUH? DUKE? Y-YES... OF COURSE!



HE WAS RIGHT, TOO? BOBBY
WAS ALWAYS RIGHT...

BOBBY, HOW
DID YOU
KNOW DUKE
WAS AT THAT
DOOR? HOW?

INTUITION, I
GUESS, DAD. IT
JUST... JUST
FLASHED
THROUGH
MY HEAD!

I REMEMBER IT ALL... IN AN INSTANT...
EVERYTHING. THOSE CALM, COLD INTEL-
LIGENT EYES LOOKING UP AT ME... BORING
INTO MINE. AND MY FEAR. YES, I WAS
AFRAID. I ADMIT IT. BUT NOW, AS THE
PAST VANISHES AND I STAND BEFORE
THESE CREATURES FROM ACROSS THE
VOID, I KNOW THAT BOBBY IS STILL MY
FLESH AND BLOOD. NOW CAN I LET HIM
GO?...

STOP! NO! YOU'LL
NEVER TAKE HIM! I
WON'T LET YOU!

YOU CANNOT PREVENT IT! THINK! YOUR WORLD
HAS STILL SO FAR TO GO. YOU KILL... STRUGGLE
AGAINST EACH OTHER... LIE... CHEAT... STEAL!
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YOUR WORLD IF A SUPER
INTELLIGENCE SHOULD DECIDE TO... SAY...
CONTROL IT?

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THIS
INTELLIGENCE WHICH HAS SUD-
DENLY COME AMONG YOU WERE
USED FOR EVIL? WOULD YOU
HAVE YOUR WORLD ENSLAVED?
PERHAPS DESTROYED?

IN YOUR HEART, YOU
KNOW THAT WE MUST
TAKE HIM AWAY... TO
WHERE WE CAN WATCH
OVER HIM... TRAIN HIM
RIGHT. THERE IS NO
OTHER WAY!

THE CREATURES FROM THE RADIANT BALL
MOVED PAST ME AND INTO THE HOUSE. I
UNDERSTOOD. ON EARTH, MY SON MIGHT ONE
DAY BECOME A TYRANT... A DICTATOR. IN THEIR
WORLD HE WOULD BE AMONG EQUALS...

YET, INSIDE ME, INSTINCT
STRUGGLED AGAINST LOGIC.
THEY WERE RIGHT, BUT HE
WAS MY SON. THEY WERE
TAKING AWAY MY SON. WHILE
THEY WERE UPSTAIRS, I
FOUND MY SON...

AND I WAITED FOR THEM TO
COME DOWN, CARRYING THEIR
BURDEN...



I STOOD THERE, MY FINGER TREMBLING ON THE TRIGGER. AND THEN MY HAND DROPPED LIMPLY. . .

I STOOD TO ONE SIDE AS THEY PASSED ME AND WENT OUT TO THE SHIP AND CLIMBED IN. . .

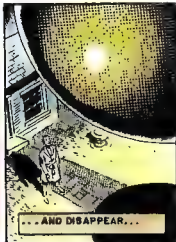
... AND I WATCHED THE GLEAMING SPHERE RISE INTO THE NIGHT TO THE STARS...



THEN I WENT BACK INTO THE HOUSE. . .



... AND SAT BY THE WINDOW ALL NIGHT UNTIL THE DAWN CREPT UP FROM BEHIND THE EAST AND ERASED THE STARS. . .



... AND DISAPPEAR...



YES, THEY'D HEARD THE CALL AND THEY'D COME ACROSS SPACE TO ANSWER. MY BOY WAS A NORMAL BOY. A BIT OF A BOOKWORM. A BIT TOO BRIGHT BUT NORMAL...

YOU KNOW DUKE'S GONE, DAD?

YES, SON! I... I FOUND THE FRONT DOOR OPEN. I'M AFRAID I FORGOT TO CLOSE IT LAST NIGHT! HE MUST HAVE GONE OUT!



... AND BOBBY CAME INTO THE ROOM...

DAD! WHERE'S DUKE? I CAN'T FIND HIM... ANYWHERE?

I KNOW...



NO, MY SON WASN'T A MUTANT AT ALL! NOT LIKE DUKE! NOT LIKE A DOG WHelpED IN THE SHADOW OF AN ATOMIC FILE...

BUT I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT DUKE, SON. HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. HE'LL BE BACK!



AND I KNEW THAT I LIED. I KNEW THAT DUKE WOULD NEVER BE BACK... THAT HE WAS OUT SOMEWHERE... IN THE VOID... WITH THEM... THE END 7

GENESIS

THE SHIP WAS THE LAST. IT THREW ITSELF UPWARD ON A PILLAR OF FLAME INTO THE EMPTY OCEANS OF SPACE. AND I AM ALONE. THEY'VE GONE WITH BITTER WORDS AND IRONIC JESTS, THE OTHERS. THEY'VE LEFT THE CLEAN DESOLATE SILENCE OF MARS AND THEY'VE RETURNED TO EARTH... TO THE BRAWLING CROWDED PLACES. THE DREAM... THE HOPE... IS ENDED. AND THE TEARS ARE HOT AND SALTY ON MY LIPS...

MARS. RED MARS... GODDESSES OF PROMISE. COOL MARS... WHOSE VIRGIN QUIET WE'D TORN TO SHREDS WITH OUR BULLDOZERS AND OUR TOO-LOUD LAUGHTER AND, OUR EAGER SCRATCHING IN ITS SAND FLESH. NOW SHE CAN SLEEP AGAIN... UNDISTURBED THIS TIME TIME FOREVER. THE COLONY HAS BEEN ABANDONED...



I WALK AND THE VOICE WHISPERS TO ME. THE VOICE. I'D HEARD IT SO MANY TIMES IN THE PAST WEEKS. INSIDE MY SKULL. INSIDE MY BRAIN. WHISPERING. AND ALWAYS, AFTERWARDS, THERE'D BEEN THE PAIN. IT IS BECAUSE OF THE INEVITABLE PAIN THAT I HURRY. ...



BACK TO THE ABANDONED CITY...
BACK TO THE EMPTY SHELLS. I FIND
MY BED AND THROW MYSELF UPON
IT AND THE AGONY CLOSES AROUND
ME LIKE A GIANT FIST, CRUSHING.
THE PAIN, THE AWFUL SHATTERING
PAIN. AND YET, EVEN THEN, THERE
IS THE OTHER PAIN... THE PAIN OF
REMEMBERING...



I'D LOOKED UP WHEN TORSSON'D
SPOKE... UP TO THE TINY GREEN BALL
THAT WAS EARTH. AND I'D REMEM-
BERED THEN, TOO...



I CRY ALONG WITH THE REMEM-
BERING. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN?
THIRTY YEARS? YES... THIRTY
YEARS AGO I'D STOOD AND STARED
AT PROMISING MARS ON OUR ASTRO-
SCREEN AS WE'D HURTTLED
TOWARD IT...



THERE
SHE IS!

BEAUTIFUL!
SHE'S
BEAUTIFUL!

FOUR OF US HAD LEFT EARTH IN A
SLIM NEEDLE OF GLEAMING ALLOY.
BUT I HAD BEEN THE FIRST... THE
FIRST MAN TO SET FOOT ON MARS.
AND I'D FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HER...



HEY, LEE! SNAP OUT OF
IT! YOU'RE HOLDING
UP THE PARADE. WE'VE
GOT WORK TO DO...

I'D REMEMBERED THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND
THE PRAYER THEY'D ENTRUSTED IN US A FEW SHORT MONTHS BEFORE...

GO THEN, AND MAY
SUCCESS BE YOURS...
FOR YOU ARE OUR
ONLY HOPE! MAN-
KIND IS DOOMED!

MAN... DOOMED?
SIR, YOU'RE...
YOU'RE JOKING!

DEATH IS NEVER HUMOROUS,
CAPTAIN HARPER. WITHIN A
GENERATION, THE ENTIRE
RACE WILL BE STERILE!
A CENTURY FROM NOW, MAN
WILL HAVE CEASED TO
EXIST!



THAT IS, UNLESS
WE CAN LEAVE
EARTH AND
ESCAPE THE
RADIATION!

ON THE DAY MAN
DISCOVERED ATOMIC
FISSION, HE COM-
MITTED SUICIDE!
THE SUDDEN RELEASES
OF ENERGY HAVE
RELEASED OTHER
THINGS!

CERTAIN RADIATIONS...
CERTAIN FORCES WE
ARE UNABLE TO COPE
WITH. THEY ARE SLOWLY,
STEADILY STERILIZING
US... MAKING US
IMPOTENT!

IT DOESN'T
SEEM
POSSIBLE...

IT IS... HORRIBLY SO!
EARTH IS A DYING
PLANET... FOR MAN IS
DYING. BUT IF YOUR TRIP
IS SUCCESSFUL... IF MAN
CAN ESCAPE TO AN
UNCONTAMINATED
WORLD... WE CAN BUILD
AGAIN...



THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD HAVE **POOLED THEIR RESOURCES!** WE'VE BEGUN CONSTRUCTION OF THE **FIRST SPACE SHIP**. YOU FOUR HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO **MAN THIS SHIP... TO ATTEMPT TO REACH MARS!**

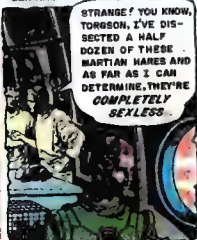


IT HADN'T SEEMED REAL...THE WHOLE THING. EVEN WHILE I'D STUDIED AND LEARNED TO FLY THE SHIP, IT HADN'T SEEMED REAL. AN AIR FORCE CAPTAIN...A BIOLOGIST...A MINERALOGIST... WE WERE **NOTHING**. AND YET A **WORLD** HAD WATCHED, PRAYED FOR US. AND, ONE DAY, THE PRAYERS HAD BEEN ANSWERED. I'D STEPPED FROM OUR SHIP... THE FIRST MAN ON MARS...



G'MON, LEE! SNAP OUT OF IT!

MY TASK WAS FINISHED WITH THAT. I'D WANDERED THE EMPTY DESOLATION WHILE THE OTHERS HAD BEGUN **THEIR TASKS**. AND MARS HAD CREPT INTO MY HEART, MY SOUL. WHEN WE'D LEFT AT LAST, A PART OF ME HAD REMAINED BEHIND...



STRANGE! YOU KNOW, TORGSON, I'VE DISSECTED A HALF DOZEN OF THESE MARTIAN MARES AND AS FAR AS I CAN DETERMINE, THEY'RE **COMPLETELY SEXLESS**.

I'D LONGED TO RETURN AGAIN TO MARS, SO I'D JOINED THE FIRST COLONISTS. WE'D BEGUN BUILDING. THE OTHERS HAD COME: THE FARMERS... THE STOREKEEPERS... AND WITH THEM, THE SPOILERS... THE ADVENTURERS. AND I'D WEPT FOR MY LOVE, DEEP DOWN INSIDE...



THEY'D COME AND THEY'D SPLIT THE SILENCE WITH THEIR CURSE. THEY'D ROARED THEIR HAPPINESS, BECAUSE THE YEARNING FOR THE RACE TO SURVIVE WAS BRED INTO THEM. THEY'D MADE MARS IDEOUS WITH THEIR DIN. BUT THEY'D BUILT...



THEY'D RAISED A NEW WORLD. THEY'D DOTTED PEACEFUL MARS WITH ROISY CITIES. AND THEY'D REMAINED MEN. THEY'D BRAWLED AND HATED AND SCARRED HER VELVET NIGHTS WITH THEIR NEON SIGNS. AND THEN, MARS HAD TAKEN HER SILENT REVENGE...



GENTLEMEN... THE FACTS ARE TOO OBVIOUS TO BE DENIED... THE EIGHT YEARS OUR COLONISTS HAVE BEEN ON MARS, THERE HAS **NOT BEEN ONE SINGLE BIRTH!**

BUT, MR. PRESIDENT! THE RADIATIONS WHICH ARE MAKING MAN STERILE HERE ON EARTH DO NOT **EXIST** ON MARS! **WHY** HAVEN'T OUR COLONISTS REPRODUCED?

WHY? HERE IS THE ANSWER, GENTLEMEN!



THE THING THAT THE ATTENDANT HAD PLACED UPON THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S DESK HAD BEEN A CASE WITH A SINGLE SEXLESS MARTIAN HARE. IT'D CREEPT OUT SLOWLY. THEN, THE COUNCIL HAD SEEN WHAT WE ON MARS HAD SEEN SO MANY TIMES

IT...IT'S **SPLITTING!** I'D...I'D HEARD THAT SOME OF THE FORMS OF MARTIAN LIFE REPRODUCE BY **DIVISION...**

NOT SOME! ALL!

THERE IS YOUR ANSWER, GENTLEMEN! EVERY LIVING THING ON MARS REPRODUCES ITSELF BY **BINARY FISSION... SPLITTING...** AS AN AMOEBA DOES HERE ON EARTH.

AND MAN... MAN IS **NOT** AN AMOEBA!



WHY, IT'S... IT'S **LOSING ITS SHAPE!**



EXACTLY, GENTLEMEN. MAN IS NOT AN AMOEBA! SOMETHING IN THE ATMOSPHERE ON MARS... LIKE THE RADIATIONS HERE ON EARTH... WILL **NOT LET MAN REPRODUCE HIS WAY!** MANKIND, GENTLEMEN, IS **DOOMED!**



THE LAUGHTER ON MARS HAD DIED THEN. THE FARMERS AND THE STOREKEEPERS AND THE HARD-FACED ADVENTURERS HAD FALLEN SILENT. COLONISTS HAD STOPPED COMING. THE ATMOSPHERE ABOVE THE RED SANDS HAD BEGUN TO SEETHE WITH THE VIBRATIONS OF DISCONTENT...



JUST FOUR ROCKETS THEY SENT! JUST FOUR ROCKETS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS! THEY'RE GIVING US UP! WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? WE'RE NOT MARTIANS! WE'RE EARTHMEN!

IF WE'RE **GOING** TO DIE OUT, AT LEAST WE CAN DO IT **AT HOME... ON EARTH!**



I'M GOING HOME! AND IF THE **REST** OF YOU HAVE ANY SENSE, **YOU WILL TOO!**

I'D WATCHED THEM GO. I'D SEEN THEIR ROCKETS BLAST AT THE RED SAND AND CLIMB AWAY FROM MARS. BUT. I'D STAYED...



ALL THROUGH THE LONG YEARS I'D STAYED, WATCHING THEM LEAVE, UNTIL THE CITIES WERE ALMOST DESERTED. IN THE END, THE HARD-FACED ONES, THE ADVENTURERS, WERE ALL THAT WERE LEFT... LOOTING... DESTROYING. AND I'D WATCHED THEM. I'D WATCHED THE DREAM DIE.



THEY'D NOT UNDERSTOOD, THE HARD-FACED ONES. NOR HAD I. I'D GATHERED FOOD-STUFFS... CLOTHING... TOOLS. I'D FILLED MY QUARTERS WITH THEM. IT HAD BEEN AS IF SOMETHING WAS DRIVING ME TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE. AND YET THERE *WAS* NO FUTURE. I *KNEW*...



WE MIGHT HAVE DONE SO MUCH ON MARS, BUT MARS HAD REJECTED US. MARS HADN'T WANTED OUR BRAWLING AND OUR OBSCENITY. AND SO, AT LAST, I'D STOOD ALONE AND WATCHED THE LAST ROCKET GO...

IF ONLY... IF ONLY WE'D LEARNED...



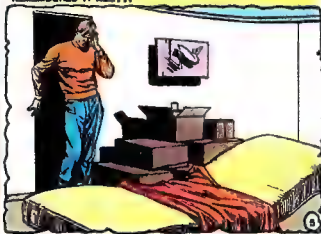
THE VOICE HAD BEGUN COMING THEN... THE VOICE IN MY HEAD... DOWN DEEP, AND ALONG WITH IT HAD COME THE PAIN... SLIGHT AT FIRST... THEN WORSE AND WORSE... UNTIL IT HAD WRACKED MY WHOLE BODY AND I'D BEGUN TO DO STRANGE THINGS... FOOLISH THINGS...



THEY'D SHOT OUT THE WINDOWS FROM THE BUILDINGS AND SMASHED THE STATUES AND LAUGHED OBSCENELY. AND SICK AS I WAS, I'D WISHED THAT THEY WOULD GO SO THAT MARS MIGHT BE AGAIN AS I'D FIRST COME TO KNOW HER... UNTOUCHED AND CLEAN...



I'D WALKED BACK... AND THE VOICE IN MY HEAD HAD WHISPERED TO ME... AND THE PAIN HAD COME... AND I'D REMEMBERED IT ALL...



THIRTY YEARS. OF ALL MANKIND, ONLY I HAVE BEEN SO LONG ON MARS. I THINK OF THAT NOW WHILE BEING COMPRESSED INTO ONE SINGLE THROBBING PULSE. I THINK AND IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MY BODY DRAWS IN UPON ITSELF.



I TEAR AWAY THE CLOTHES WHICH BIND MY WRITHING MUSCLE'S... AND IN MY ADOBY, IT IS AS IF MY FLESH MELTS AND FLOWS...



IT IS AS IF... AS IF... OH, LORD!.. AS IF I AM BECOMING A NOTHING... A SLOB OF PROTOPLASM WITHOUT SHAPE OR SUBSTANCE



AND NOW THERE IS ONLY DARKNESS. EMPTY, ENDLESS, DARKNESS. LIKE SPACE. I STIR. I MOVE... WITH A CURIOUS NEW LIGHTNESS AND STRENGTH. I OPEN MY EYES.. AND I KNOW! WE BOTH KNOW!...



AND OUR HEARTS SING A SONG OF THANKSGIVING, BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT MARS HAS BEEN KIND TO ME. WE KNOW THAT I HAVE ADAPTED...



I HAVE REPRODUCED... BY DIVISION... AND NOW I AM NO MORE. THE EARTHMAN IS GONE... NEVER TO RETURN. WE GO OUTSIDE TOGETHER. WE STAND NAKED IN THE COOL SILENCE OF THE MARTIAN NIGHT AND WE SMILE AND DRINK IN THE PEACE AND PROMISE OF THE GODDESS, THE MOTHER MARS. WE WANT MARS.



THE END.

Comics Buyer's Guide Fan Awards for 1990

Welcome to the *CBG* Fan Awards. *Comics Buyer's Guide*, a weekly newspaper devoted to the world of comic books, sponsors these awards to let you, the readers, tell the world which comic books are your favorites. Just fill out the ballot and send it to the address below.

1. Favorite Editor
2. Favorite Writer
3. Favorite Penciller
4. Favorite Inker
5. Favorite Colorist
6. Favorite Letterer
7. Favorite Cover Artist
8. Favorite Comic-Book Story
9. Favorite Comic Book
10. Favorite Limited Comic-Book Series
11. Favorite Original Graphic Novel or Album
12. Favorite Reprint Graphic Novel or Album
13. Favorite Character
14. Favorite Publication about Comics

Only material with a 1990 cover date can win. Votes for projects that did not have a 1990 publication date will not be counted.

Copy this ballot and give it to your friends, so they can vote, too. *Anyone who loves comics can vote* — but only vote once. If you vote more than once, all of your votes will be thrown out. Vote only in the categories you want, and ignore any you don't. *Comics Buyer's Guide* is not eligible for Category 14.

Every voter in the United States will get a *free copy of Comics Buyer's Guide* #924, dated Aug. 2, 1991, unless you already have a current or expired subscription to *CBG*. That issue will carry the list of winners! Votes from other countries will be counted, but we regret that free copies of *CBG* can't be sent out of this country, unless your vote is accompanied by \$2 in U.S. funds to cover handling and shipping.

Mail your ballot individually in a single envelope by *June 1, 1991*, to:

Comics Buyer's Guide Fan Awards
700 East State Street
Iola, Wisconsin 54990

You need not cut or tear out this page in order to vote! Copies are acceptable and will be counted.

Name Age Male Female (circle one)

Street or Box

City, State, and ZIP

COSMIC CORRESPONDENCE

Whew! Just got finished with a letter column for *The Vault of Horror* and now here's another one breathing down my neck!

Dear Editors,

Wood's cover for *Weird Science* #3 is splendid and brilliantly coloured, a real antennae-boggler. Once again you've published another slizzing whizzer of a bumper corker big thick science fiction comic. These science fiction strips are perceptive and intelligent in terms of story as well as being superior works of comic art.

"The Gray Cloud of Death" is a dramatic and uncompromising story, ending with a trio of spacemen waiting as death approaches. The cruel irony of "The Invaders" is an indictment of our vain, smug and paranoid notions of "civilization." "Cosmic Ray Bomb Explosion" is an astounding piece of work. It has great irony, again ending with shattering doom and revelation as the Cosmic Ray Bomb goes off in the last panel. It's really nice to read a strip that actually features a *Weird Science* creative team. With similar dramatic irony the character Don Hartley in Jack Kamen's "The Trap of Time" ends up as a buried skeleton after experimenting with time travel. Kurtzman's "Atom Bomb Thief" also ends with a bang. My stomach sank when I saw the caged-up pigs, remembering watching film of an A-Bomb test on television in 1962. . . houses blown away in one instant, caged pigs burning and squealing. Thanks for alerting us citizens to the dangers and horrors of mad science running amuck. So I'll stick like radioactive protoplasm to *Weird Science*. Keep 'em comin'!

John Miller
Edinburgh
Scotland, UK

Issue #3 was the BEST so far! The cover kept me mesmerized for I don't know how long! I still can't get over the irony of "The Martian Monster" and "The Cosmic Ray Bomb Explosion." Those one-page stories such as "Speed-Up" and "Dr. Rand's Experiment" are cool, too. But one question: what's with the nickel price hike?

Stephen Kramer
Clifton, NJ

That extra nickel's to pay me for doing double letter column duty! (The publisher just got a big laugh out of that one!) Actually, it reflects long-needed improvements in the quality of the paper and printing for our covers.

Dear Editor,

Let me congratulate you folks at Gladstone for doing an excellent job on the E.C. line of comics. *Weird Science* #3 was no exception.

Being a comic fan, I knew of the E.C. comics, never

dreaming to collect reprints. That's why I'm thankful to you. But why are they published bi-monthly? I understand and there is a limited supply of stories, but please publish more! There is so much junk out there, so thanks a lot for being here. Another request is for maybe more titles.

Lots of continued success!

Moshe Benyamini
Staten Island, NY

I loved issue number 3 of *Weird Science*! Especially "The Gray Cloud of Death"! Tell me, how come you guys are so creative? Were you born with it?

Dee Chang
Fort Smith, AR

The guys who did the stories were indeed born with creative talent, but it took work and dedication to develop it. Good thing they had what it takes!

Dear Ghouls and Goblins,

I'm back! To tell you I got my *Weird Science* comic! It was spooky. I especially loved "Cosmic Ray Bomb Explosion". It was terrific! You should write a story about aliens from outer space and putting the world to a complete end! Ha! But us Belings, MARTIANS, don't have to worry about that because we're not completely from Earth ourselves! Ha! If you have any news about your comics please write! I can never wait to read your comics when I get home from school! So keep up with your writing. O.K.! Peace!

Your Alien Being,
Damon Wahl
Reading, PA

I am glad you edit the reprints only lightly, apart from omitting period advertising (which would have been interesting, surely?) these are as originally published. **Except the colouring.** As I have nothing with which to compare I cannot say whether this is close to the original, or whether it is "creative." It is certainly attractive, but if it is the latter, it is questionable. DC explain their new colouring as providing the quality that was not technically possible in the past. But how far can this go before "reprints" are redrawn and rewritten because a publisher considers that superior artists and writers are currently available?

Francis Hertzberg
Cheshire, England

Fortunately, most of Marie Severin's silverprints from the 60s still exist, so we're usually able to provide the nearest thing to the original color that can be had for love or money. As to how far "refurbishing" reprints can be taken, that's hard to say, but these days the boundary is being pushed out a lot farther than we ever intend to go.

All for now, but always room for more, so write to:

Cosmic Correspondence

P.O. Box 2079 • Prescott, AZ 86302 • (602) 776-1300

VICIOUS CIRCLE

HE WAS ONE OF US AND YET THEY KILLED HIM. HE WAS MY FRIEND AND YET THEY LIFTED HIM HIGH AND FLUNG HIM FROM THE CLIFF-EDGE. WE HUNTERS WERE RETURNING AT DUSK. WE'D LEFT THE COOL, GREEN-SMELLING FOREST AND CROSSED THE BARREN PLACE BENEATH THE CLIFFS, WHEN I SAW. I SAW HIM STRUGGLE. I HEARD HIM SCREAM AS HE FLAIED IN MID-AIR ON HIS WAY TO A ROCK-RUPTURING DEATH. AND, STRIP-LING THOUGH I WAS, I SURE THAT THIS DAY MY SPEAR WOULD TASTE HUMAN BLOOD. FOR HE WAS MY FRIEND...

WE USE THE OLD NAMES STILL. HIS NAME WAS JOHN AND I'D LOVED HIM. HE CAME DOWN SCREAMING AND THEN THE SCREAMING STOPPED AND HE WAS DEAD. I FLUNG THE FRESH-KILLED DOG FROM MY SHOULDERS. I WOULD HAVE GLIMBED TO THE CLIFF EDGE ABOVE, BUT THE OTHERS WOULD NOT LET ME PASS...

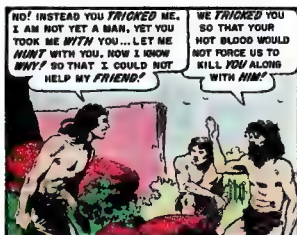


STOP! WOULD YOU BE LIKE HE IS NOW? YOU KNOW OUR LAW!



THEY SPOKE OF THE LAW AND I TREMBLED. I KNEW THAT JOHN HAD BROKEN THE LAW. FOR ONLY SUCH A CRIME IS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH. OURS IS A STRONG LAW! YET EVEN SO, I COULD NOT BE STILL...





NO! INSTEAD YOU **TRICKED** ME. I AM NOT YET A MAN, YET YOU TOOK ME **WITH** YOU... LET ME **HUNT** WITH YOU. NOW I KNOW **WHY!** SO THAT I COULD NOT **HELP MY FRIEND!**

WE **TRICKED** YOU SO THAT YOUR **HOT BLOOD** WOULD NOT FORCE US TO **KILL YOU** ALONG WITH HIM!



LIARS! LIARS! IT WAS NOT TO **SPARE ME**, BUT TO **SPARE YOURSELVES!** NOW **TASTE MY REVENGE!**

I FOUGHT BUT THERE WERE MANY. THEY OVERPOWERED ME AND TOOK MY WEAPONS...



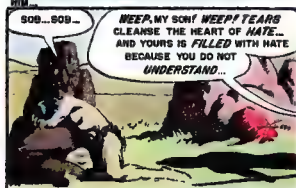
IT WAS SAMUEL, THE WISE... THE ELDEST... OUR LEADER. I SNATCHED A ROCK FROM THE CAIRN...

HE STOOD THERE, GNARLED AS AN ANCIENT TREE. AND I HATED HIM. FOR ONLY HE COULD SPEAK THE WORD WHICH SENT A MAN TO HIS DEATH. YET I COULD NOT KILL HIM.

I BRING YOU A CHOICE, MY SON! LEARN THE **MYSTERY**, THE REASON FOR OUR LAW, AND BE AS WE ARE... OR **REMAIN HERE**, UNARMED AGAINST THE BEASTS OF THE NIGHT!



YOU... WOULD YOU **SLAY** ME, DAVID? YOUR FRIEND'S CRIME WAS **GREAT!** WOULD YOU HAVE **ALL** OF US SUFFER FOR THE **FOLLY OF ONE?**



SOB... SOB...

WEEP, MY SON! WEEP! TEARS CLEANSE THE HEART OF **HATE...** AND YOURS IS **FILLED WITH HATE** BECAUSE YOU DO NOT **UNDERSTAND...**

THERE WAS NO CHOICE. **NO MAN** CAN LIVE FOR LONG AWAY FROM THE PROTECTION OF THE CAVES, AND I WAS NOT **YET** EVEN A MAN, AMONG OUR PEOPLE, ONLY THOSE WHO LEARNED THE **MYSTERY** OF THE **LAW** WERE **ACCOUNTED MEN**. SO I FOLLOWED SAMUEL...



I CLIMBED BEHIND THE OLD ONE... THE WISE ONE... AND I SHIVERED. FOR MANY WERE THE TALES I HAD HEARD OF THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE LAW, YET I WALKED PROUDLY, ERECT... AS I PASSED THE HUNTERS AND THEIR WIVES AND THEIR WIDE-EYED CHILDREN...



SAMUEL TOOK ME TO HIS CAVE...

I SEE NO MYSTERY HERE, OLD MAN! THE MYSTERY IS NOT A THING TO BE SEEN WITH THE EYES OR FELT WITH THE HANDS, MY SON...



THE OLD MAN SAT DOWN ON HIS BED OF SKINS...

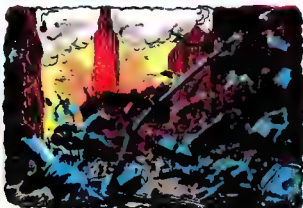
IT IS A THING TO BE SEEN FROM WITHIN! THE MYSTERY IS NOT A THING THAT IS BUT A THING THAT WAS! IT WAS A TIME LONG AGO, WHEN MEN WERE NOT AS THEY ARE NOW... WHEN MEN LIVED IN SHINING TOWERS...



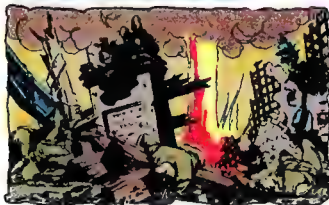
THE OLD ONE SPOKE, AND HIS WORDS CARVED VISIONS IN MY HEAD. I SAW GREAT SPIRES REACHING SPARK-LING FINGERS TO THE SKY. I SAW SMOOTH STONE PATHS, WIDE AS RIVERS... AND THINGS LIKE SILVER BEETLES, RACING UPON THEM... AND THINGS LIKE WINGLESS, GLEAMING INSECTS, FLYING IN THE SKY OVER THE SPIRES... AND GOD-MEN...



ALL THAT I SAW AS THE OLD ONE SPOKE. AND THEN I SAW THE TOWERS CRUMBLE. I SAW THE STONE PATHS SPLIT AND BREAK AND RECOIL LIKE SHAKES. I SAW THE FIRE LIKE THAT OF A HUNDRED SUNS...



AND I SAW THE GOD-MEN DIE. HUNDREDS... THOUSANDS... MILLIONS. I SAW THE FIRE RISE LIKE A GALL AND MUSH-ROOM UPWARD AND HANG OVER THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION LIKE A GLAZING CAIRN OF FLAME...



AND SOMEHOW I KNEW. I KNEW THAT THE THINGS THAT FLEW HAD BROUGHT DEATH. THEY'D HOVERED... AND THEN THEY'D STREAKED AWAY. AND WHERE THEY'D HOVERED THERE'D BEEN THE FLAME! THE AMPUL, WHITE FLAME! OH, LORD...



IT IS ONLY A BRANCH FLARING IN THE FIRE, MY SON!

IT...IT WAS SO **REAL!**
I...I DREAMED. I
THOUGHT IT WAS
THE FIRE FROM THE
SKIES... FROM
THE THINGS THAT
FLEW!

THE THINGS
THAT FLEW
WERE KNOWN
AS **MACHINES**,
MY SON! AND
WHAT YOU
SAW WAS
CALLED **WAR!**

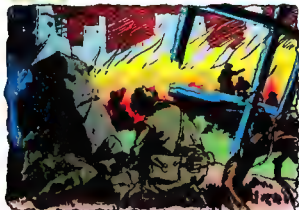
THE GOD-MEN FOUGHT FOR
STRANGE REASONS,
THEN. **NOT FOR FOOD**
OR FOR **MATES...** BUT
FOR THINGS YOU WOULD
NOW **UNDERSTAND** AND
ALWAYS THEY FOUGHT
THESE WARS WITH
THEIR **MACHINES**. THE
MACHINES THAT **FLEW**
WERE CALLED **ROCKETS**.

I SAW IT ALL THROUGH SAMUEL'S EYES. I
SAW THE **ROCKETS** IN THEIR THOUSANDS. I
SAW THEM BATTLE AND DESTROY EACH
OTHER UNTIL THE LAST ROCKET CROPPED
FROM THE **SKIES**. AND THEN THERE WERE
DIFFERENT THINGS FLYING IN THE **SKIES...**
STRANGE THINGS... LIKE BIRDS, WITH
WINGS THAT DID NOT MOVE...



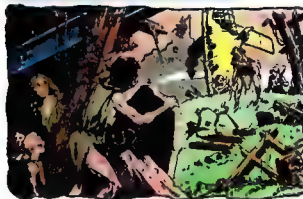
I SAW MORE GOD-MEN DIE, AS IF THEY WERE SACRIFICED
TO THE MACHINES THEY THEMSELVES HAD CREATED.
AND THEN I SAW THEM BEGIN TO LOSE THEIR GODLI-
NESS...

I SAW THEM FIGHT AMONGST THEMSELVES FOR THE
LAST SCRAPS OF FOOD. I SAW THE BEETLES SPIT
FIRE AND KILL THE GOD-MEN...



AND I SAW THE GOD-MEN STARVE. I SAW THEM PERISH
BY THE MILLIONS. BUT STILL THEIR WAR WENT ON. ONE
DAY, THERE WERE NO MORE FLYING THINGS IN THE AIR...
NO GLEAMING BEETLES ON THE GROUND...

THE GOD-MEN FOUGHT WITH ONLY THE THINGS
THEY COULD CARRY...WITH THE BLACK STICKS
WHICH SPIT FLAME AND THE KNIVES MADE OF
GLEAMING, SHINING STUFF...



I SAW THE LAST BATTLE. AND I SAW, IN THE END, THE GOD-MAN FIGHTING AS WE FIGHT... WITH CLUBS... AND SPEARS...



AND AFTER THE BATTLE, I SAW ONE GOD-MAN CLIMB A HEAP OF RUINS AND SPEAK TO THE OTHERS...



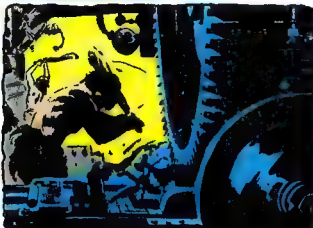
THAT MAN WAS THE FIRST, MY SON. THE FIRST TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MEN HAD DONE... THE FIRST TO CURSE THE THINGS WHICH HAD MADE A WILDERNESS OF HIS WORLD. HE PREACHED TO THE OTHERS... THE FEW THAT WERE LEFT. HE MADE THEM UNDERSTAND...



I SAW THE MAN WHO PREACHED TO THE OTHERS LEAD THEM. I SAW THEM SEEK OUT ALL OF THE THINGS THAT THEY HAD BUILT...



AND I SAW THEM CRUSH THEM... SMASH THEM... DESTROY THEM... THE MACHINES!



AND WHEN THEY'D WRECKED EVERY LAST MACHINE, THEY WERE CONTENT. THEY LEFT THE RUINS AND THE DEAD PLACES AND THE WRECKED MACHINES, AND THEY WENT BACK TO THE FORESTS AND THE CAVES...



AND TIME BURIED THE MACHINE, MY SON. AND THE LAW WAS BORN! NEVER AGAIN WOULD MAN BUILD MACHINES WHICH WOULD DESTROY HIMSELF! YOU KNOW THAT LAW, MY SON...

YES! BUT I NEVER UNDERSTOOD IT! NOW I DO...



THEN *NOW* YOU UNDERSTAND WHY JOHN WAS *KILLED*. JOHN *BROKE* THAT LAW! JOHN *MADE* A MACHINE! AND THE MACHINE MEANS *DEATH*! IF MEN BUILD *ONE*, THEY WILL BUILD *OTHERS*!

AND IF THERE ARE *OTHERS*, ONE DAY MEN WILL *FLY* AGAIN AND *KILL* AGAIN. I *LOVED* JOHN, BUT IT IS *GOOD* THAT JOHN DIED, NOW I CAN SEE THE *WISDOM* OF IT!

I CAN UNDERSTAND! BUT... BUT *THIS MACHINE*? HAS IT BEEN *DESTROYED*? I HAVE NEVER *SEEN* A MACHINE. IT WOULD BE A TALE TO TELL MY *SONS* SOME DAY... THAT I HAD ACTUALLY *SEEN* A MACHINE...

THE OLD ONE AROSE AND WENT TO THE CAVE MOUTH... AND WATCHED THE PROCESSION FILING PAST...

NO, THE MACHINE HAS NOT BEEN DESTROYED. *NOT YET!* IT IS TO BE PLACED IN THE *FIRE* SO THAT ALL MAY SEE AND KNOW HOW *STRONG* IS OUR LAW! COME...

THEY CARRIED IT PAST THE OLD ONE'S CAVE... THE MACHINE. AND IT WAS TRULY WONDEROUS. ITS USE, I DID NOT KNOW, IT WAS STRANGE... NEW... ALIEN. I FELT THE HAIR RISE ON MY NECK, BUT I DID NOT TURN AWAY, AFRAID THOUGH I WAS...

REMEMBER WHAT YOU *SEE* THIS NIGHT, DAVID. THE *BEGINNING* OF ALL EVIL! THE GOD-MEN *HAD* SUCH A MACHINE LONG AGO AND IT EVENTUALLY BROUGHT THEM *AGONY* AND *DOOM*...

REMEMBER, THAT YOU MAY TEACH YOUR CHILDREN, SO THAT THEY MAY TEACH THEIR CHILDREN... NOW *GOOD* IS OUR LAW! REMEMBER THAT YOU HAVE *LOOKED* UPON A MACHINE! REMEMBER ITS *NAME*...

THE *GOD-MEN*... OUR ANCESTORS... CALLED IT... A *WHEEL*!

THE
END

ADAM LINK IN BUSINESS

ADAPTED FROM THE THIRD OF THE ADAM LINK STORIES BY EANDO BINDER

I AM A ROBOT... A CONTRIVANCE OF WHEELS AND WIRES. AND YET I ALSO HAVE THAT HUMAN ATTRIBUTE CALLED "EMOTION". THIS WAS PROVEN ...TO ME, AT LEAST...WHEN MY REPRIEVE CAME. I HAD BEEN MARCHING DOWN THE JAIL CORRIDOR IN THAT "LAST MILE" BETWEEN TWO GUARDS. AHEAD OF ME, THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR, I COULD SEE THE SOLEMN GROUP OF WITNESSES AND THE ELECTRICAL MACHINE IN WHICH I WOULD SIT IN ANOTHER MOMENT AND HAVE MY BRAIN BURNED TO BLANKNESS BY SURGING SEARING ENERGY FOR THE "MURDER" OF MY CREATOR, DR. LINK. MY METAL FACE SHOWED NO FEELINGS. BUT WITHIN, MY THOUGHTS, THEN, WERE SAD AND BITTER THOUGHTS. I HAD BEEN ORDERED BY MAN TO GET OUT OF HIS WORLD...

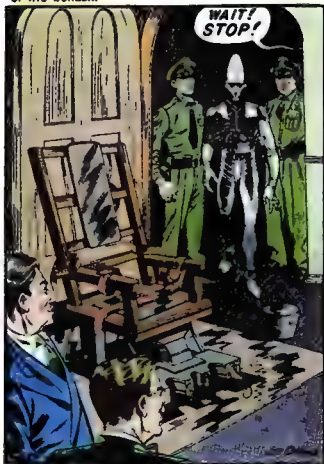
SUDDENLY THERE WERE SHOUTS BEHIND US. PEOPLE CAME RUNNING. I SAW A FACE I KNEW... THE YOUNG REPORTER WHO HAD DEFENDED ME EDITORIALY. FLUSHED, PANTING, HE SPOKE TO THE GOVERNOR WHO HAD COME TO WITNESS MY EXECUTION...



MR. HALL'S WITNESSES SPOKE FERVENTLY...

THIS ROBOT SAVED US FROM THAT TENEMENT FIRE! I CAME TO BRIEFLY AND SAW HIM! WE OWE HIM OUR LIVES!

HE RESCUED MY BOY FROM BEING RUN OVER BY A CAR! HE'S NOT A MURDERING MONSTER! GOD BLESS YOU, ADAM LINK!



JACK AND I OFTEN TALKED OF MY "FUTURE..."

YES, DR. LINK LEFT ME THE SECRET OF THE IRIDIUM-SPONGE BRAIN. BUT I WON'T MAKE MORE ROBOTS... NOT UNTIL I FIRST ADJUST TO HUMAN LIFE SO I MAY LEAD OTHERS OF MY KIND!

BUT THERE MUST BE A CAREER FOR YOU, ADAM!

ONE DAY, I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM DR. POLSON, AN EMINENT SCIENTIST WHO HAD TESTED MY I.Q. AT THE TRIAL...

YOU GAVE A FORMULA FOR HORMONE-GROWTH RELATIONSHIP THAT YOU DEDUCED FROM KNOWN FACTS. I'VE CHECKED IT! IT'S CORRECT! YOU ARE A SCIENTIFIC GENIUS, ADAM LINK! WE NEED YOU IN OUR RESEARCH LABORATORY...

SORRY, DOCTOR! BUT THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME AN IDEA!

DR. POLSON'S CALL GAVE ME THE INSPIRATION, AND THAT IS HOW I WENT INTO BUSINESS. I TOOK AN OFFICE IN THE MAPLE BUILDING...

ADAM LINK
—
SCIENTIFIC CONSULTANT

GREAT, ADAM! I'LL ADVERTISE FOR YOU AND TAKE CARE OF PUBLI-CITY EVERY INDUSTRY IN THE CITY WILL FLOCK HERE FOR HELP!

AS MY REPUTATION SPREAD, JACK'S PREDICTION CAME TRUE. ON PAPER, DOING PURELY MENTAL WORK, I UNKNOWNED SCIENTIFIC PROBLEMS RANGING FROM COMPLEX CHEMICAL REACTIONS TO INTRICATE SUBATOMIC RESEARCH...

AMAZING! THIS FORMULA IS JUST WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR FOR SIX YEARS! HERE'S MY CHECK... AND \$100 AN HOUR IS CHEAP! YOU'RE A ROBOT EINSTEIN!

KAY'S VOICE WAS LOW, MUSICAL. HER SOFT HAND, RESTING ON MY HARD, METALLIC SUBSTITUTE, SUDDENLY MADE ME REALIZE I HAD BEEN "BROUGHT UP" BY DR. LINK WITH A PURELY MALE VIEWPOINT. THOUGH A SEXLESS ROBOT, I WAS MENTALLY A MAN THE OPPOSITE OF THIS WOMAN...

SHE IS DIFFERENT SOMEHOW... MYSTERIOUS! I CANNOT READ HER EMOTIONS ON HER FACE AS READILY AS I CAN WITH MEN!

BUT NOW I COME TO A MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT HUMAN PROBLEM. IT IS ONE THAT I FEEL I CAN NEVER QUITE EXPLAIN. BUT I WILL TRY. WHEN MY GROWING BUSINESS DEMANDED A SECRETARY TO HANDLE DETAIL, JACK BROUGHT A GIRL HE KNEW...

ADAM, THIS IS KAY TEMPLE!

HOW DO YOU DO, MR. LINK? I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU!

QUICKLY, THOUGH, I SENSED THAT JACK WAS IN LOVE WITH KAY. BUT DID SHE LOVE HIM? I COULD NOT TELL. SOMETIMES, AFTER OFFICE HOURS, WE THREE SPENT EVENINGS TOGETHER. I RECALL WITH MIXED PLEASURE AND PAIN ONE NIGHT, AS A SINGER WARBLER THE LATEST HIT TUNE...

HE HAS A HEART OF GOLD... AND NERVES OF STEEL. HE RATTLES LIKE A DISHPAN... AND NEVER EATS A MEAL. WHO DO I MEAN? WHY, ADAM LINK THE RO-O-O-BOT!

IT WAS A SILLY DITTY, OF COURSE, WITH ENDLESS VERSES, BUT AS I TOOK A BOW, EXHORTED BY THE M.C., A DRUNK AROSE AT THE NEXT TABLE, HOLDING A CAN-OPENER...NOCKINGLY...



I IGNORED THE DRUNK UNTIL...



WE LEFT QUIETLY, BUT I WAS DEPRESSED IN THE TAXI. FRANKENSTEIN! WOULD THEY ALWAYS THINK THAT OF ME? BUT THEN KAY SPOKE. IT IS A MEMORY I'LL CARRY WITH ME ALWAYS, MAKING SUCH THINGS EASIER TO BEAR...



I RECORD THE FOLLOWING INCIDENT ONLY TO INDICATE A POSSIBLE FUTURE ROLE FOR ROBOTS. ONE DAY, WHILE I WAS DEPOSITING SOME CHECKS AT MY BANK, THREE MASKED MEN SUDDENLY APPEARED.



AFTER RAPID CALCULATING THOUGHT, I LEAPED AT THEM, DISARMING TWO BEFORE THEY COULD FIRE...



I SLID ACROSS THE MARBLE FLOOR LIKE A BASEBALL PLAYER, UPSETTING THE THIRD BEFORE HIS SPRAYING MACHINE GUN COULD GIVE MORE THAN A BRIEF BURST...



OUTSIDE, TWO MORE IN A GET-AWAY CAR SPED OFF, ABANDONING THEIR FRIENDS. I SMASHED THROUGH A PLATE GLASS WINDOW, TAKING A SHORT CUT...



TO AVOID INJURING PEDESTRIANS BY OVERTURNING THE CAR, I MERELY OVERTOOK IT AND LIFTED THE REAR WHEELS FROM THE ROAD. THEY SPUN INEFFECTIVELY AND I PULLED THE CAR TO A HALT...



COSMIC CORRESPONDENCE EXTRA

You may have noticed that we've reproduced two versions of the cover art for *Weird Science-Fantasy* #29 in this issue. Both are by Frank Frazetta, and are virtually identical but for some interesting details, whereby hangs a tale (as told by Bhub Stewart):

A curious karma hung over Bill Gaines' purchase of this illustration since it had been rejected by *Famous Funnies*—and *Famous Funnies* was the comic book displayed on newsstands in 1934 by his father, Max Charles Gaines, thereby launching the comic book industry. "That's the only piece of art I used in my life that I didn't buy outright," Gaines told interviewer Rich Hauser in 1969. "As I recall, I was paying 60 bucks for a cover in those days. I think I offered him 40 bucks for the rights or 60 bucks for the cover outright, and Frank, well, he was never one for the buck. He'd rather have the art. He kept it, and I think I paid \$40 or \$50. Beautiful work."

A 1954 twilight in Boston. Another day's session on *Li'l Abner* (on which Frazetta had a lengthy tenure) came to a close, and the studio drawing tables were vacated. Everyone was gone except for Frazetta, who stayed late that night to do the ninth in his series of Buck Rogers covers for *Famous Funnies* (#209-216). Surrounded by Moonbeam McSwine, Tiny Yokum, Nightmare Alice and the other Dogpatch denizens, Frazetta completed the picture in one sitting.

But the various 1953-54 editorial crusades, accusing comic books of excessive violence, had already brought repercussions. The editor who deemed the Buck Rogers combat-with-clubs as too violent for *Famous Funnies* was Stephen A. Douglas, a pioneer in the field. Had Douglas chosen to go with Frazetta's drawing, it would have turned up on *Famous Funnies* #217.

When Gaines decided to put this art on *Weird Science-Fantasy* #29, he requested two minor changes, and these were done by Frazetta with small paste-overs on the illustration, adding hair to the foreground figure and deleting Buck's helmet.

Regrettably, we can only reproduce the art inside this book, but even at that Frazetta's style comes through as nothing short of spectacular!

And here is a final statement concerning "altering" classic E.C. material:

My feeling is that a typo such as "giraffs" (in the *Bradbury* story "There Will Come Soft Rains"—ed.) should be corrected. In fact, the stories should be carefully proofread because E.C. made lettering corrections with rubber-cement paste-overs, and there are some such corrections which have fallen off the art over the years, revealing the original error.

To intentionally alter the stories is another matter. After studying these changes closely, I submit that

you are altering the meaning of the stories because your changes are not consistent. In "The Aliens," on page three, the aliens hold a copy of *Weird Fantasy* #17, and in panels one and four you have deleted the price, the months and distributor marks. One of the circular E.C. insignias has been replaced by the triangular Gladstone symbol. However, you have not altered the cover in the last panel of page four. These changes mean the story no longer works—because your *Weird Science* #2 has a front cover that differs from the WF #17 front cover held by the aliens. The impact of the original ending ("... this may be the very magazine those creatures will find...") is rendered meaningless. I've always interpreted the word "may" to mean that the aliens found not just WF #17, any copy, but a specific copy—the reader's own personal copy. Within the careful story construction this amplifies the pay-off, suggesting that an outrageous fantasy has been given a physical reality. Even in reprint, the story should still work because one knows it refers to actual copies of E.C.'s WF #17 still in existence. But in your reprint it doesn't work because there is no Gladstone or E.C. comic book with a front cover like the one depicted! If your defense is that you printed a similar cover on page 33 of WS #2 and one need only open the book to the staples and bend it backwards, well, we could go at this forever—why isn't the page 33 cover printed full-bleed? What about the inconsistency on page 4? Etc.

Bhub Stewart
Queens, NY

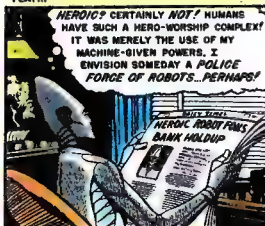
Most of you who have written to us on this matter, including Bhub, have had experience with E.C. prior to the current reprint series, and make valid points concerning "tampering" with stories. It could hardly be otherwise, and we here at E.C./Gladstone are grateful for your input; it's helped us modify our approach to making these reprint books work in today's marketplace. (Believe us, the fewer things we feel we have to change, the better we like it!).

One point: some of you, because of your past experience with E.C., seem to harbor the notion that anyone who reads an E.C. story today knows as much as you do about it. This is understandable, as you are reading the E.C./Gladstones with a sense of reflection. However, the vast majority of our audience has never heard of E.C. before, and are reading these books with a sense of *discovery*! Remember what that was like? Any of us with an E.C. background should, but it can be difficult to recollect that there was a time when we didn't know squat about E.C., either. So let's give the new fan-addicts a chance to read and enjoy, and then, if they wish, dig into the lore. This way, there's more likely to be an interest in and an appreciation of the background we "old codgers" possess.

Cosmic Correspondence

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THE NEXT DAY, THE NEWSPAPER LAUDED MY FEAT...



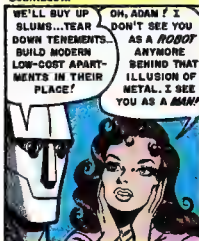
ONLY PERHAPS? I SAY THIS, THINKING BACK TO WHAT HAS HAPPENED. KAY, JACK AND I OFTEN HAD SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS.



SHOCKED AT KAY'S STORIES OF SLUM POVERTY AND WRETCHEDNESS, I SUDDENLY KNEW WHAT TO DO WITH THE LARGE SUMS OF MONEY I WAS RAPIDLY ACCUMULATING FROM MY BUSINESS...

KAY'S EYES WERE SHINING...

YES, A MAN... BIG, STRONG, AND GENTLE... OH, SO VERY GENTLE. INSIDE, YOU ARE WARM AND SYMPATHETIC, I KNOW. YOU'RE HUMAN, ADAM!

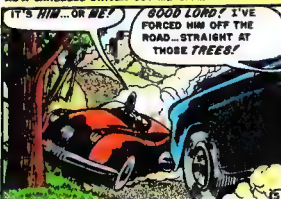
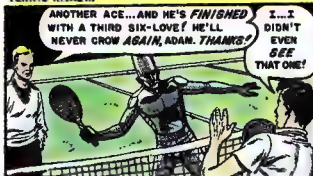


YOU WILL REMEMBER MY "COUSIN" TOM LINK, WHO FIRST BEFRIENDED ME. BUSY ON LEGAL DUTIES ELSEWHERE, HE RETURNED NOW AS MY ATTORNEY IN THE SLUM-CLEARANCE PROJECT...

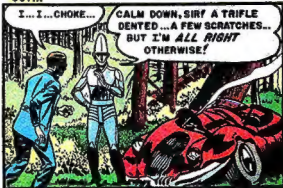


TOM LEFT SOON WITH ALL IN ORDER AND KAY AND JACK AND I FOUND TIME FOR SPORTS. GOLF, BOWLING, TENNIS. I COULD NOT HELP BUT EXCEL IN ALL OF THEM, WITH MY SUPERIOR STRENGTH AND TIMING. JACK JOYFULLY USED TO TAKE DOWN THE INSUFFERABLE EGO OF A BOASTFUL TENNIS RIVAL...

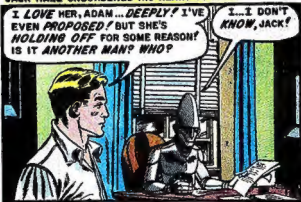
I ALSO BOUGHT AND DROVE A POWERFUL SPORTS CAR, HANDLING IT UNERRINGLY AT HIGH SPEEDS ON LONE DRIVES. BUT ONCE, I HAD TO MAKE A CHOICE AS A CARELESS DRIVER CUT ME OFF...



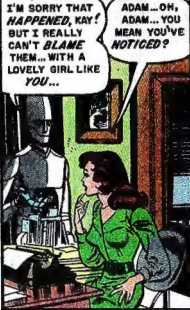
I'LL NEVER FORGET THE SHOCK ON THE OTHER DRIVER'S FACE. HE STOPPED AND RUSHED TO MY COMPLETELY WRECKED JAGUAR AND I STEPPED OUT...



BUT AGAIN I AM ONLY DIGRESSING, TRYING TO AVOID IT. BUT I MUST GET BACK TO KAY TEMPLE. ONE EVENING, JACK MALL UNBURDENED HIS HEART TO ME...



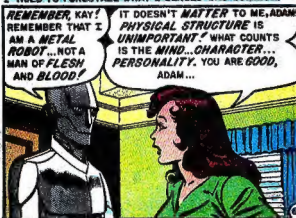
I FOUND OUT, THOUGH, A FEW DAYS LATER. ATTRACTED BY KAY'S BEAUTY, ONE CALLER AT MY OFFICE LINGERED TO ANNOY HER...



SHE STARED AT ME IN A STRANGE WAY... THE WAY SHE STARED AT ME, I RECALL NOW, FROM TIME TO TIME FOR LONG MONTHS, AND I WAS SUDDENLY FRIGHTENED BY WHAT I SAW REVEALED OPENLY IN HER EYES...



BUT KAY REFUSED. SHE INSISTED UPON TALKING. SWIFTLY I TRIED TO FORESTALL WHAT I SENSED WAS COMING...





SHE SAID IT CALMLY, NOT HYSTERICALLY, WITH A TENDER HAND ON MY CHROMIUM-PLATED SHOULDER. THERE WAS A GLOW IN HER EYES THAT BLINDED ME. THIS WAS MAD...INCREDIBLE! A HUMAN GIRL IN LOVE WITH A METAL ROBOT? I WAS THAT "OTHER MAN" STANDING BETWEEN JACK AND KAY. I TRIED REASON...

JACK WANTS YOU, KAY! HE NEEDS YOU! GO TO HIM! HE LOVES YOU!

NO! I'M SORRY FOR JACK! I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED HIM...BUT FOR YOU! I WANT TO BE WITH YOU, ADAM... ALWAYS!



FOR A MOMENT, I HAD A WILD DREAM BUT I ERASED IT FROM MY MIND. IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, MY METAL THROAT WOULD HAVE SOBBED AS I JERKED AWAY FROM HER, ALMOST BRUTALLY...

I LEFT HER WITH TEARS IN HER EYES...TEARS THAT I COULD NOT SHED MYSELF...



I DROVE TO A DESERTED CABIN IN THE QUIET COUNTRY TO BE ALONE. HOURS HAVE PASSED SINCE I FIRST BEGAN WRITING THIS ACCOUNT. I HAVE THE TELEGRAM READY FOR TOM LINK, INSTRUCTING HIM TO LIQUIDATE MY BUSINESS. NOW, THE LETTER TO JACK...



DEAR JACK,
DEEP DOWN IN HER HEART,
THERE CAN BE ONLY *ONE*
MAN FOR KAY...*YOU!* MARRY
HER! TO YOU BOTH, MY
DEEPEST LOVE...

SOON, I WILL LEAVE HERE FOR A SECRET PLACE I OWN, KNOWN ONLY TO ME...MY ROBOT RETREAT! I MAY RETURN TO THIS WORLD SOMEDAY, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHEN! THERE IS MUCH *GOOD* I CAN DO...YET MUCH *HARM*. I MUST WIPE OUT ALL EMOTION THAT COULD *DESTROY* ME...



I WILL VANISH INTO HIDING, PERHAPS FOR YEARS. I WILL NOT RETURN UNTIL I AM TRULY A *MACHINE* AGAIN. IT IS THE *ONLY WAY!*

SIGNED...
ADAM LINK
ROBOT.



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